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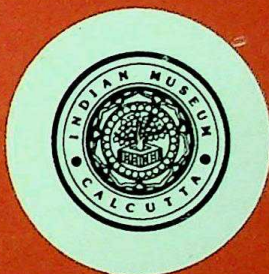
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EDITORIAL NOTE

The present volume of the Indian Museum Bulletin incorporates the proceedings of the International Seminar on 'Routes and Travellers in India' organised by the Indian Museum to commemorate the 175th anniversary in December, 1989. The seminar was attended by distinguished scholars from Denmark, U.K., U.S.A. and Bangladesh, besides the delegates from various states of India. The four day seminar was inaugurated by Sri R. Venkataraman, then President of India. Prof. B. N. Mukherjee of the University of Calcutta delivered the key-note address. The papers presented in the seminar aimed at tracing the inland and riverine routes in the sub-continent and also the overland and maritime routes connecting India with outside world in different epochs. The articles also reveal relevant information from the accounts of eminent travellers, evolution of the modes of transport as well as developement and maintenance of roads and public thoroughfare.

Inspite of our best efforts we could not procure all the papers presented in the seminar from the participating scholars. The nineteen articles presented in this volume deal with the subject from the pre-historic time to late medieval period of Indian history. Synopses of few papers have also been appended to. The inaugural speech by Sri R. Venkataraman, Ex-President of India has added a greater dimension to this volume.

Our heartiest thanks are due to the contributors and participants of the seminar for lending their full cooperation.

S. S. BISWAS

Secretary

Indian Museum, Calcutta.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA

R. VENKATARAMAN

IT is with great pleasure that I join this distinguished gathering to mark the 175th anniversary of the Indian Museum, and the inauguration of the International Seminar on 'Routes and Travellers in India'. May I at the outset extend my cordial felicitations to all those associated with the Indian Museum. By their work in and for the Museum, they have had a living communion with our past. I would also like to offer my greetings to the participants in the seminar, especially those who have come from abroad. By travelling to India for this purpose, they have become both students and successors of the ancient travellers in India such as Hiuen Tsang, Fahien, Alberuni, St. Thomas and Francis Xavier.

To strike a personal note, I hail from a district - Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu - which is the home of one of the best museums in the country. I refer to the Saraswathi Mahal set up by the renowned Mahratta ruler, Raja Serfoji ; a treasure house of antiquities which leaves visitors deeply impressed by the richness and diversity of our cultural legacy. I am therefore conscious of the value and relevance of museums and it has always been my endeavour to see museums in the places that I visit.

Truly has it been said that a nation writes an autobiography on its antiquarian remains and a museum preserves it for posterity. The Indian Museum, Calcutta founded in 1814 within the premises of Asiatic Society is the earliest and the largest multipurpose museum in the Indian sub-continent, possibly in the continent of Asia. It is important to remember that the museum movement that has developed so admirably in this country, culminating in the establishment of about 400 museums, originated with the foundation of this Indian Museum.

Many a rare and unique Indian as well as trans-Indian specimen and artefact relating to humanities and natural sciences are preserved and displayed in forty galleries in this Museum. Having commenced its work with the idea of collection, the Museum has, over the years, come to acquire more meaningful objectives: research, documentation, preservation and dissemination of knowledge. The Indian Museum has become a powerful instrument for the instruction of the public, also plays a vital role in the creation of an awareness in the community of our rich heritage.

Some of the possessions of the Museum include the

(a) second century B.C. Bharut Railing,

- (b) fragments of the Sunga age from Madhya Pradesh,
- (c) a cabinet of more than fifty thousand coins,
- (d) South East Asian arts and crafts,
- (e) fossil remains of the Sivalik range of hills, rare Indian flora and fauna,
- (f) Egyptian antiquities,
- (g) the sacred relic caskets of the Buddha excavated at Piprawa, Mughal miniatures and the variegated textiles of Persia and Tibet.

Visitors come from all over the country to this Museum, eager to learn of our great heritage and see its colourful exposition. The Museum provides a unique opportunity to enlighten visitors from all walks of life specially those from the countryside. It is heartening that through its extra mural educational programme the Museum also goes to villages with exhibitions and audio visual programmes.

I have learnt with pleasure that the Indian Museum, did a pioneering job in organizing the first Inter-State Museum exhibitions at Shillong and Guwahati last year. The Museum deserves to be complimented on the fact that this operation did not cause any damage to the objects.

At the same time, this 175 years old Museum remains ever young by acquiring new specimens, reorganising old displays and opening new galleries. These new programmes and projects infuse new life to it. The Museum thus remains a precious and self-renewing treasure house of historical and artistic items.

At the turn of its 175th year the Museum will doubtless introspect and ponder over its future role. I would like to lay more stress on achieving international standards and on modernization, with the help of latest scientific and technological developments. I am aware that all the museums are not fully equipped in terms of trained personnel to look after their art treasures in scientific manner. I am glad that in its deliberations, the Central Advisory Board of Museums has suggested that the Department of Culture through the National Museum at New Delhi and the Indian Museum in Calcutta may arrange training of personnel for smaller and State museums, in the upkeep and display of art treasures. A coordinated programme needs to be worked out to obtain the optimum benefit out of this training programme.

I am also aware that our museums are facing some other problems of which the first and the foremost is the problem of the security of museum objects. Since the last decade, cases of theft and smuggling of antiquities have increased. Realizing the magnitude of the problem, it is urgent that more effective measures be adopted to check such losses.

The second task relates to preservation and conservation of the cultural property. As deterioration sets in fast there is need for a well conceived plan of action without any further delay. The documentation of museum objects is an enormous problem. Without effective and systematic documentation there cannot be proper communication. Data processing equipment and computers can be very helpful in maintaining various types of records. To evolve a common scientific system for documentation these devices of modern technology must be harnessed.

It is only appropriate that this occasion be used to open an enlarged Art Gallery displaying paintings from all parts of India, a display which brings out the regular development and continuity from pre-historic cave drawings to the Bengal classical period. Reproduction of prehistoric paintings, murals of Ajanta and Ellora, Buddhist and Jaina manuscript illustrations, paintings of hills and deserts, the artistic expressions of the Deccani School and the entire panorama of Bengal painting offer a feast to the eyes of connoisseurs of art. Side by side another wonderful collection of arts and crafts of China, Japan, Tibet, Burma, Nepal, Java, Cambodia, Malaysia and Siam have been put on display in a new gallery.

Culture is a highly complex phenomenon. Dr. Radhakrishnan once said that centuries of education bring out a civilisation and centuries of civilisation bring out a culture. Culture encompasses almost all endeavours and achievements of mankind, specially emotional, artistic and creative, reflecting the human ethos. Creative artists have produced the finest and most sophisticated works of art of an intricate nature, revealing their technical skills and artistic vision.

Friends, different Ages in history have been described by the historians as the Old Stone Age, the New Stone Age, the Age of Iron, of Copper, and so on. There is some validity about those categorizations and in differing degrees they apply to India also. But in India, running through all the Ages is the silken thread of Art and Craft as a sacrament. This thread never breaks, revealing new possibilities, age and after age.

Museums have great value for persons of every age, young or old. Their educative value is immeasurable. In a short tour of an hour or two one gets information which will take decades to gather from books. Besides, being visual education, it remains embedded in human memory more incisively than a printed or spoken word. Man's endeavour to harness Nature for his convenience and benefit has been the same millennia ago as it is today and the skills he used with the then available tools excite our admiration. Our forefathers fought with bows and arrows. We fight with bombs and aeromissiles but fight we do, despite the march of thousands of years. Reflections of this kind emanate when we see the past and present together under one roof. To the philosopher, no less than to the historian the museum is a great teacher of moral values.

Several civilisations have emerged in the world, the Babylonian, Egyptian, Indian, Greek and Roman. Today the Indian civilisation survives, most others having been extinguished by time. One of the reasons for the survival of the Indian civilisation is its infinite capacity for absorption and adaptation of every new idea that flowed into the country. This great lesson is demonstrated by almost every important Indian museum. Therefore the habit of visiting museum should be inculcated not only in the children but also on the older generation so that they may be able to see things in the historic perspective.

For the appropriate preservation of our historico-cultural artefacts, it becomes necessary that museum consciousness be fostered among our people. A beginning, in fact, needs to be made with our children. Our school curriculum should be such where museum-based education is also given due importance so as to instil among our people a knowledge of our cultural heritage.

II

I am glad to note that the opening of this new international gallery coincides with the convening of the International Seminar on 'Routes and Travellers in India'. This is an excellent theme of cultural interaction between scholars of different countries.

Routes—over land, riverain and maritime are the arteries of a country through which the life—rhythms of a nation are maintained. Convenient routes offer facilities for political, social, commercial and cultural contacts, both inland and overseas. Since the dawn of Indian civilization the country has produced many a statesman and scholar who have acted as cultural ambassadors in the world. It is through them that the impact of Indian culture has spread to other parts of the globe.

Pre-historic travellers, socio-religious leaders and pilgrims, sailors and merchants looked at this vast country of ours and recorded their experiences in travelogues and accounts which have now become valuable source material for historians. Various modes of communication and routes and pathways figure prominently in their writings. I am sure that the Seminar will throw light on the topography of ancient and mediaeval India. The experiences of the companions of Alexander, Megasthenes, Diomachus, Heliodorus, and of travellers Hiuen Tsang, Alberuni, Fa-Hien and the socio religious leaders like Buddha, Mahavira, Sankaracharya, Nanak, Chaitanya, Kabir, the royal travellers, Asoka, Mahendra and Sanghamitra form a rich repository of travel knowledge which will always inspire the travellers and the cultural historians. Their movements through the length and breadth of this country ushered in a new movement of tourism and quest for knowledge.

I am gratified to learn that this Seminar is dedicated to the memory of our illustrious leader Jawaharlal Nehru, the architect of modern India, who himself was a rare historian, besides being a great statesman and visionary. This is a fine and appropriate tribute to him in his centenary year.

I would like to once again greet the delegates to this important Seminar and wish them success not only in their deliberations here but also in further strengthening the cultural relations between India and the countries they come from.

With these words, I have great pleasure in inaugurating the Seminar and New Gallery.

ROUTES AND TRAVELLERS — THEIR RELEVANCE TO ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL INDIA

B.N. MUKHERJEE

THE social man cannot live in isolation. For his own self, if not for anything else, he is concerned with his neighbourhood and his region and, in numerous cases, his country and the world. His contacts with the outside world have been motivated by love for human company, search for new habitats, prospects of economic and political gains, missionary zeal, scientific enquiries and curiosities about foreign lands. In early and mediaeval times the channels for such contacts were overland, riverine and maritime routes. Through these routes, mostly conditioned by geographical factors, far-flung societies came closer to one another, economically, socially and culturally.

Such developments were especially true about countries like India. The Indian sub-continent, though well demarcated by mountains and seas, was never in isolation from the outer world during the early and mediaeval periods. Traders, sailors, missionaries, pilgrims and migrators and even political adventurers purveyed all the ideas and knowledge in the sub-continent and Indian culture in different outside territories. In the 1st century A.D. Pliny, a keen observer of Indo-Roman commerce, remarked that "desire for gain brought India nearer (to the Romans)" (*Naturalis Historia*. VI 26.101—104). Within the sub-continent the routes helped in spreading political authority, religious and scientific ideas, rituals, usages, technological knowledge, trade, scripts, languages, literatures and art forms and styles from one area to another. Such intra-regional and inter-regional interactions fostered the growth of pan-Indian traditions. The routes indeed formed the network of India's cultural and sometimes even the political unity.

No doubt, the deplorable conditions of the roads, natural barriers, unsatisfactory modes of transport, circuitous travels and various other hazards in inland and sea journeys impeded communications. But improvements were gradually made in these respects, sometimes even with proper utilisation of the natural forces. Thus in the late 1st century B.C. and early 1st century A.D. the use of the monsoon winds by the sailors of the Roman empire made their voyages to India more direct and time-saving. Each technological innovation in the manufacture of carriers (like the efficiency of launching large ocean going vessels) and the devices for controlling the direction of journey (like the employment of compass, called "the south-pointing needle" by the Chinese) made communication through the routes easier and more effective.

However, even the difficulties in communication did not prevent the movements of people if they were motivated by one or more of the above indicated reasons. History has witnessed largescale migrations and also movements of armies, diplomats, traders, sailors, missionaries, pilgrims, adventurers and way-farers in ancient and mediaeval ages. They all travelled but those individuals who travelled with a purpose and left accounts of their observations are communicators of history. Though plagued by inaccuracies in understanding local names, usages and traditions, a traveller's personal experience about rulers, people and countries, recorded without fear or favour, often became a valuable source of history. Among such travellers we can include the anonymous author of the *Periplous tes Erythras Thalasses* (1st century A.D.), Hsuan-tsang (7th century), Ibn Battuta (Shaykh Abu Abdallah, 14th century), J.B. Tavernier (17th century) and many others. On the other hand, the information about the Indians' travels, to other countries provides us with an idea of the country's connection with and knowledge about the other parts of the world.

Importance of travellers in India's history is epitomised in her name. The name of the country of Sindhu (on the lower Sindhu or Indus) was pronounced by the Persians (including travellers) as *Hi (n) du* (replacing *s* by *h*) and the Greek traveller-geographer Hecataeus of the 6th-5th century B.C. transformed the name into *Indo>India* (there having been no letter in Greek conveying exactly the sound of *h*, which was indicated only by an accent which again was dropped in writing the name of Roman characters. The Greeks (who had first-hand knowledge of the Achaemenid empire of persia) must have known the name from the persians. Had they heard it from the men of the sub-continent they would have spelt it as *Sindia* (since Greek *sigma* could have the same pronunciation as Brahmi or Kharoshti *sa*). Originally denoting a territory on the lower Indus, the name began to signify, by the late 4th century B.C., the whole of the sub-continent. Therefore, it will not be a travesty of truth if the name India is considered as the travellers' gift. It is also remarkable that Ctesias of Cnidos (late 5th century B.C.), who is acclaimed as the first foreign author writing an independent work on India (*Indika*), was a Greek doctor at the Persian court and therefore essentially a traveller.

Thus for understanding India's history and culture of ancient and mediaeval periods the relevant routes, developments in modes of communication and the travellers' accounts should be studied along with other sources. Ways and means should be suggested in the light of historical experience, for utilising modern systems of communication for national and international integration. The task before the participants in the seminar, convened for the purpose, is to sail down the course of history through different routes inspired by the mottoes *charenavetti* (he knows by moving) and *charaiveti* (only move on). The man knows by travelling; so keep on moving. Not fare well, but fare forward, voyagers (T.S.Eliot, "The Dry Salvagers" pt.III, last two lines).

EVIDENCE OF DIFFERENT ROUTES AND COMMUNICATIONS INCLUDING MODES OF TRANSPORT IN PRE AND PROTO HISTORIC SETTLEMENTS

I. K. SARMA

IT is held that the early man originated in Eastern Africa from where he moved to Asia including India. But the U.S. scientists claimed, basing on the similarities in viral genes of man and Asian primates, that the cradle of Man is in Asia. Whatever be the origin, *the evidences from the Indian Sub-continent on Early man are extremely limited to the recovery of stone tools from various geographical zones. The communication between them may be merely the result of group contacts over the hunt, hunger and sex. Ultimately, culture diffusion and colonization may have been the resultant factors.*

I. PRE HISTORIC SETTLEMENTS: (5,00,000 years B.P. to 10,000 Years B.P.) (Fig.1)

Ever since the discovery of the first palaeolithic hand axe at Pallavaram south of Madras¹ (30th May, 1863), by Robert Bruce Foote, the pioneer of Indian Pre history, investigations to locate the Pre historic settlements were pursued vigorously². It was again Bruce Foote who recovered a human *tibia* in association with the palaeoliths at Attirampakkam³. After a long gap exciting discovery of what is considered to be the earliest known human skull of Homo-Erectus Narmada Ensis, was reported in 1983 from the Narmada at Hathnora in Sehore district in late midpliestocene boulder conglomerate deposits by the Geological Survey of India⁴. The pre historic research in India suffers from paucity of biological remains (Palaeontological and Palae-botanical) and reconstruction of human like ways and their environmental setting has not been possible in precise terms.

In India, south of Ganges was colonized by a handaxe-cleaver using people but whether these axes or the technique was derived from East Africa to West coast Saurashtra as [Late] H.D.Sankalia⁵ postulated or taken recourse of the land route passing through Arabia and Southern Iran as Graham Clark and Stuart Piggot⁶ claimed were disputed issues. The geologist say that during certain epochs of pliocene period there were land bridges. The handaxe-cleaver culture of the Lower Palaeolithic⁷ was widely spread in the peninsular India below Narmada. Whereas the Chopper-Chopping tool complex of the Sub-Himalayan India and Pakistan with levalloisian flakes comparable to Olduvai of Africa, mixed with handaxes appear in the river valleys of North and West. A massive flake and crude handaxe near Pahalgam on the bank of the Liddar river is regarded as the earliest find of the lower Palaeolithic industry in India⁸.

The pebble tools do occur, though in lesser frequency in South, specially Krishna—Pennar zones (Kurnool Cuddapah—Nagarjunakonda-Giddalur), amidst a dominant handaxe-cleaver assemblage. *Whether these explain the contacts of the groups of people or merely indicate tool making processes, one is not certain.*

Among the Middle Palaeolithic assemblages, besides the handaxes, flake tools consisting of scrapers and blades were used. But we have practically no idea of the Man behind and not to speak of the associated fauna. But reports about the remains of 13-extinct mammals in the deposits yielding stone age tools were known. They are of wild elephant, wild horse, wild ox, rhino etc. from Hoshangabad-Narasimapur areas, (Narmada) and also in the upper reaches of Godavari-Krishna rivers. These animals were part of hunt and perhaps not for traction. In the next stage (or age), the upper Palaeolithic culture is represented by smaller tool kit. Blade-burin, flake industries, the occupation being the caves and rock shelters due to changing ecological conditions. There is also change in raw materials for tool-making. Bones were also reused. This development is believed to be indigenous and somewhat localised. The Mesolithic is a continuum out of the upper palaeolithic culture. The dating of these assemblages and their inter-relationships have been speculative issues. The type sites, however, are Sairai Nahar Rai, Bagor, Langhnaj and Adamgarh in the North, Kurnool (Billasurgam), Nagarjunakonda and Teris in the South. More specially the microlithic tools out of Rock crystal and quartz found among the assemblages at the Teri, Nagarjunakonda (South-East India) and Kuchai (Orissa) provide links to the Sri Lankan microlithic industries,⁹ wherein rock crystal was the chief material for microliths. The well preserved skeletons of over 60 individuals from Sarai Nahar Rai and Mahadaha on the Gangetic plains ($10,500 \pm 100$ years B.P.) and several fossil hominid specimens from South Central Sri Lanka at the cave sites of Beli lena ($12,260 \pm 870$ B.P.), Batadomba ($15,830 \pm 126$ B.P.), provide a valuable data of the terminal or post pliestocene phase of South Asia. *Right from the Prehistoric times, geographically India was approachable by sea from west, south and south-east and by land routes from the hilly-forested valleys both of north-east and north-west. In particular the north-west routes - the famous Khyber the Bolan passes (even the Gomal) to and from Afghanistan and Baluchistan were open to invaders, traders and travellers during the Protohistoric as well as historical periods. Similarly the southern peninsula had perhaps a bias for sea faring activity.* The question remains—Do we get any evidence of ancient routes, communication systems and modes of transport among these Prehistoric assemblages of India? Have we come across any settlement sites?—the answer perhaps lies in careful search and more research.

II. BEGINNING STAGES OF THE NEOLITHIC

After the stone ages, the earliest stages pertaining to the emergence of domestication of plants and animals in India have not been properly outlined due to lack of specific data. It is admitted by many that the preliterate developments in Indian Archaeology could not have taken place in isolation. India must have received some cultural elements

from the other cradles of Asian civilization viz., West Asia, China and the Far East. This being so the familiar question is,—Did India receive its knowledge of food production from East or West or was the invention repeated independently?

The recent field work outside¹⁰ the country in North China, Formosa and Thailand has shown that the eastern cradle is as early as the western (fertile crescent), Wilhelm G. Solheim-II, declared¹¹ that "the first domestication of plants in the world was achieved by Hoabinhian people sometime around 10,000 B.C., that the Basconian was a local evolution of Hoabinhian without outside influence; that the northern and central mainland South-East Asia had progressive cultures within which the first stone grinding and polishing in Asia, if not the world, developed and pottery was invented, that not only this first domestication of plants as suggested by Sauer provide the idea of agriculture to the west, later a number of plants to India and Africa."

India is sandwiched between the Eastern and Western nuclei. The formative stages of the early Neolithic settlements are not clearly indentified or defined. Except microlithic assemblages, a few ground stone tools, hand made pottery wares, and rudimentary huts, we have not been able to secure more evidences to assess the cultural movements, the routes and communications of this period.

In the North-West some of the sites excavated in Afghanistan and Pakistan (upper Indus and Baluchistan) bordering the Punjab-Kashmir¹² areas, emergence of the Neolithic phase has been known from 7th millennium B.C. to 4th millennium B.C. The sites are Gomal valley, Saraikhola, Leobanir-III, Mehargarh in Baluch Plateau and Domeli (Punjab)¹³ on the Indian side. The Aceramic phase reported by A.K. Sharma at Gufkral¹⁴ is quite late (2800 B.C.) and certainly this cannot be regarded as a phase indicative of the emergence of the Neolithic in the North-west.¹⁵ At best the site may represent survival of an older life pattern. However, certain rare evidences of early domestication of animals and plants have been noted from Bagor.¹⁶ (Phase 1) and at the Rock shelter site of Adamgarh respectively datable to 3800 B.C. and 5500 B.C. (+F - 120). Sarai Nahar and Koldiwaha in District Allahabad provided assemblages datable to 6000 B.C. wherein microliths, domesticated plants and animals were associated.¹⁸

Recent excavations have revealed that exploitation of wild rice in late Mesolithic (or Proto Neolithic) and both wild and domestic varieties in the Neolithic levels dated to 6570 ± 210 and 5440 ± 240 and 4530 ± 185 B.C. respectively. Sedimentological studies in Belan and Son valleys and the Polynological and sedimentological studies in the salt lakes of Rajasthan clearly point out to the possibility of wild rice domestication. Rice originated among Austic peoples somewhere between Central India and South China. North-east India was the most likely place for the first cultivation of rice. Considering the extent of two wild varieties (*Oryza nivara* and *Oriza satuva*), and scores of landraces of rice in the eastern ghats of India, many parts of China and South-East Asia it would be quite possible to expect the origins of plant cultivation in

those parts of Asia. M.L.K. Murthy who carefully recorded the excavated evidence from Kurnool caves tried to show that the village farming communities moved into this area when the Mesolithic were still inhabiting the zone. This is a case of survival of hunter food-gatherers as late as mid-third millenium B.C. Pollen studies in Kashmir, Rajasthan and Madras have indicated the beginning of agriculture in India as early as 6000 B.C.¹⁹

The Thailand evidence (Spirit cave) on the cultivation²⁰ of seeds is the earleast known (9500 B.C.) in the world. Again rice began to be cultivated in this very region (Non-Nok-tha) in 3500 B.C. an evidence which clearly antedates the Chinese and Indian, (Lothal, Kalibangan, Hulas, Rangapur IIA and Navadatoli II and III), evidences. It is becoming clear, therefore, that 'Rice' cultures spread from East whereas the 'wheat' from West to the Indian sub-continent. Vishnu Mittre identified certain potential areas in the eastern parts of the country, specially Sikkim, Assam and Orissa, where the progenitors of food plants were found. He expects the oldest²¹ phase of the Neolithic here. So our plea to look to the East for early contacts and cultural impacts gains validity²² but remains to be substantiated. *Even then why should India be always at the receiving end? Should not have some movements radiated from India?*

III. HARAPPAN CIVILIZATION (Fig. 2)

An area starting from Sutkegendor in Makran in the West, Alamgirpur (Meerut in U.P.) Rakhigarhi (Haryana) and Hulas in the East, Manda (Jammu Dist.) and Rehman Dehri (Pakistan) in the North to Daimabad in the South was regarded as the extent of the Harappan Civilization. The beginning of this civilization is dated to 2800 B.C. but this date is almost certainly not the earliest as we are yet to dig deep at Mohenjodaro and other such early Indus centers. The mature phase is bracketed between 2300-1800 B.C. It is now realised that the basis for the emergence of the Harappan civilization has to be looked within the village communities around. A. Ghosh²³ saw "sothi substratum at work" in the growth of Harappan. The Pre-Harappan villages are also known now from Baluchistan and Pakistan²⁴ (Mehragarh-IV, Cholistan desert, Gumla, Rehman Dehri, Jhang; Hathial and Jalilpur). The anthropological data has shown that Harappan culture was adopted by the local people at different centres which ultimately pave the way for its urban character and growth. Randhawa²⁵ rightly pointed out that the size of Harappan towns itself indicates that it was a plough agriculture with dependence on bullocks for draught. The varying racial and physical features of the population in each region, under the influence of variations in ecology led to a variety of agricultural practices. In Indus Valley Harappan sites wheat and barley were known, while in Punjab Harappan, besides the above, new crops like lentil, horse gram, jawar, millets were found. In western U.P. (Hulas) and Gujarat (Lothal-Rangpur), rice and other crops were cultivated. Archaeologists²⁶ have identified new and varied evidences Urd was found for the first time in Harappan levels at Daulatpur (Haryana). Ragi, essentially known in Deccan Chalcolithic sites has now been recorded in Late Harappan Hulas. Sorghum Bicolor and pearl millet native to East Africa were found in Harappan levels at Rojdi (Gujarat). *It would be extremely important to obtain the mode and mechanics of diffusion of such crop patterns from East Africa to West India.*

The real riddle of the Harappan civilization's origin is the *raison d'etre* for its Indianness.²⁷ Therefore, H.D. Sankalia proclaimed that "It now appears that the Indus Civilization had its roots in India-Sind, East Punjab, "Haryana and Rajasthan".²⁸ To these we may now add Pakistan. The inter relationship between the Pre-and Proto-Harappan assemblages are not quite well defined though a sort of continuum in material relics and traits was noticed. R.C. Gaur²⁹, however, maintained that Pre-Harappans were chased by the Harappans and so the former settled in the Yamuna-Ganga doab.

The mature Harappan phase (2300-1800 B.C.) was the most vibrant, materially rich and standardized urban civilization which had developed extensive cultural and commercial contacts both within the country as well as beyond. Though deciphered literary records are not available, the Harappan Civilization was undoubtedly urban and historical in concept. Close cultural and trade ties existed between India and the Persian gulf countries. Indo-Bahrain contacts are exemplified from certain significant finds, like³⁰ Harappan-type pottery and reserve slipped ware in the gulf coast sites, Harappan seals from Kajor and Buni, Fire altars like those of Kalibangan and Lothal at Barbar, while a Dilimun type gulf seal was found at Lothal (in 1958), by S.R. Rao.³¹ K.M. Srivastava³² reported a steatite Harappan seal from within the burial chamber no. 1757 in Bahrain. This seal has a charging bull, a peacock and four letters of Indus script. *Srivastava opines that the buried person was an Indian agent operating from Bahrain.*

Harappan contacts with Mesopotemian cities were well attested by various artefacts—pottery wares, beads of steatite from Mohenjodaro, Mother and Child, Dog figures, Terracotta mother Goddesses, Mesopotamian cylinder seals from Indus sites (in all seven) etc. Seals of Indus origin were noted in West Asian sites like Tell Asmar, Ur, Kish, Lagash and Susa. Humped cattle originally from India were introduced to Elam, Anatolia and Syria, Mohenjodaro, Harappa, Lothal, Surkota and Balakot were some of the important trading coastal towns.

The urban Harappans seem to have kept the sea routes³³ in perfect stance to meet the growing maritime trade. Starting from the gulf of Cambay, along the coast of Arabian sea, the ships entered the Persian gulf, finally reaching the north Euphrates near Ur. The stone seal with ship and a cabin, a terracotta amulet with a ship motif, model boats of terracotta and the extensive Harappan Dockyard with perforated anchors at Lothal clearly mark out the modes and means of transport. The land routes were two fold (a) the northern route linking North Iran, Oxus, Kabul and Central reaches of Indus; (b) the southern route linking the Central and Southern Iran with Kandahar, Baluchistan and more southernly regions of Indus or Makran. The internal modes of transport were wheeled vehicles, bullock or other animal drawn carts, and occasionally chariots too. Horse as means of quick transport, though not known from Indus sites, appears in the Harappan Surkotda and Kalibangan, among the animal remains. According to J.P. Joshi, the Harappans³⁴ entered Gujarat through land routes passing through Rann and Kutch. Kutchi cattle specially horses, camels and buffaloes were considered of great value and

perhaps this pastoral base was the main factor of the inhabitants before Harappan advent. It is now becoming increasingly valid that Harappans took to land routes in Rann while in mature urban phase sea routes were tapped more often using the long coastal ports of Kutch and Surashtra. *It appears that the Harappan Civilization did not endure long with its prosperous urbanity and transmitted to its successors not the physical civilization but the metaphysics that endured.*³⁵

IV. COPPER HOARD CULTURE (2000 -1500 B.C.)

Centered in Ganga basin, the hoards of copper tools, linked by some scholars to the ochre coloured pottery (Saipai), culture were taken to have originated from Caucasians, South Russia and West Iran region. They were also regarded as pointers to tribal migration from West Asia during late or Post-Harappan period. The socketed axe of Kurukshetra is distinct and stands as a lone example of Chinese origin of the Shang period. B.K. Thapar³⁶ after a review of the latest evidences held that "the Copper Hoard Culture was in part contemporary with the Indus Civilization". Recent field work in copper bearing sites clearly indicated that there was traffic between the Harappan sites and Ganeshwar (Rajasthan), for the supply of copper objects. It was only one way as Ganeshwar region has not yielded any Harappan elements. It was purely an agricultural community with metal craft as a subsidiary occupation.³⁷

V. THE LATER NEOLITHIC AND CHALCOLITHIC SETTLEMENTS

The Neolithic assemblages obtained through excavations in the North-west, North-east, Central, Southern peninsula have been dated to 2500 - 1200 B.C. This time bracket points to a late phase of the Neolithic wherein the set up is clear and settlements are contemporary to the Harappan culture in all its phases of development as also the decline. The Harappans, besides being sea-faring were in contact through land routes as well, with the Neolithic-chalcolithic settlements of not only the nearby Rajasthan (Ahar-Gilund) Central India (Malwa, Navdatoli) but Deccan (Diamabad-Nevasa) and South (Andhra-Karnataka) India. Areas which are geographically away had also been under the spell of this Harappan Civilization³⁸ in mature as well as the later phases. The earliest cultures noted at Brahmagiri (I), Maski (I), have yielded painted and incised pottery of Harappan vintage, long parallel sided blades (Tekkalakota, Maski, Bijapur) of chert and chalcedony, besides objects and ornaments of precious metals (Kolar Gold and Copper). The Maski cylinder seal, terracotta and Lapislazuli beads, the Nagpur Museum cylinder seal (Vidarbha area), the steatite disc beads (Kurnool sites) point to the specific material exchange or commercial contacts. The Harappans secured the raw materials like gold and steatite³⁹ from the Andhra-Karnataka Neolithic.

Similarly even the Kashmir Neolithic phase has a few wheel made pots painted in orange slip with typical Pre-Harappan motifs comparable to the Kotdijian pots.⁴⁰ There exist certain unmistakable examples of material equipment such as harvestors, celts with single or double

perforations and jade beads, etc. which demonstrate links with the Yangshao culture of China. A rare example of a ground stone double-edged axe with sawed sections and longish socket-hole was found from the ancient mound at Kudavelli near Sangamesvara temple,⁴¹ Alampur, Dist. Mahbubnagar of A.P.

The so called late Harappan phase II of Daimabad⁴² dated to 2000-1800 B.C. has revealed only a few but specific examples of Harappan pottery with Indus script signs; a bone dagger in the form of anthropomorph (simulating the west Asian bronzes) terracotta stamp seal with Indus signs, and four unique figures cast in solid bronze. As reciprocal objects of exchange and contemporaneous cultural impact, Neolithic ground stone axes were found in the native Harappan contexts at Mohenjodaro, Harappa, Lothal, Desalpar and Kalibangan. Even in a later chalcolithic phase-V,⁴³ (Jorwe levels, 1400-1000 B.C.) at Daimabad, this impact is seen from a terracotta cylinder seal (House no.38). Some of the common traits like burial customs, other modes of the disposal of the dead, huts and houses of mud brick (Daimabad) show a general likeness.

The modes of transport were carts drawn by pair of bullocks as depicted on a painted bowl from Inamgaon.⁴⁴ Terracotta carts with solid wheels exist. These were also meant for agricultural usage. The terracotta seal of Daimabad has a portrayal of a chariot. The Daimabad bronzes⁴⁵ reveal existence of animal drawn carts on solid wheels (elephant, buffalo, bull rhinoceros) for transport. In this particular instance the animals were mounted on wheeled platforms meant for ritualistic processions. Among these, the chariot yoked to a pair of prominently humped-long horned bulls and driven by man, fronted by a dog kept on the tight rein.⁴⁶ The stately robust male figure in a commanding pose (16 cm. high) is indeed unique among the figures of bronze known to proto-historic India. Its nudity was covered by the hoods of the cobra. *Perhaps such chariots were in use for quick transport both in peace and war.*

It may be noted that the Mesolithic-chalcolithic settlements were in close touch with each other, the routes of contact being mainly North-South and to some extent South-North also. Thus we find the painted pottery traditions like Sawalda, Kayatha, Ahar-Malwa, Jorwe and Neolithic plainer wares coarse or gritty red and made burnished and Black-and-red occurring in varied contexts. In the Malwa cultures farming, hunting and fishing went together. They cultivated wheat, lentil, barley and rice and in some cases the settlements were enclosed by mud fortification wall with a moat (Eran). In the early Neolithic stages, there seem to be the basic types of movements among them in search of new habitat zones. (1) The axe-folks or tool makers confining to the hilly river valley tracks for raw material sources: (2) The herding folks or the cattle keepers, moving with the cattle. *A long period of herding activity preceded farming in Prehistoric India.*⁴⁷ The cattle-keepers whose remains have been recognised in the form of ash mounds (earliest being utnur and Kodekal), south of Narmada were contemporaneous to the Early Harappan, Neolithic and Chalcolithic village communities and even later metal

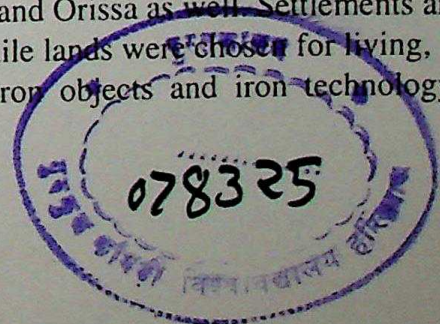
cultures (iron age). It is these cattle keepers who invoked the importance and impressed enormous advantages of the cattle and cattle products (milk, *ghee* and dung when alive; bone, meat and skin when dead) in daily life of the humans.⁴⁸ Even now these cattle keepers maintain their separate identity in Rajasthan, Andhra-Karnataka and Tamilnadu and lead a pastoral life enriching the village settlements nearby. They were in fact the transmitters of culture and commerce along with their cattle wealth (*godhan*). The routes and modes of communication were the river belts and closeby fertile pastures with wooden carts and animals as their means of transport. The special breed called the "ONGOLE BULL" with prodigious dewlap, large hump and stately walking, now confined to Kurnool-Prakasm districts, was indeed the relic of this Harappan-Neolithic heritage.

Despite these indigenous civilizing forces at work among the preliterate settlers, H.D. Sankalia insisted⁴⁹ both in content and form that the Neolithic-Chalcolithic were "colonizers, a few immigrants from Iran and West Asia who gradually mixing with the local inhabitants, created the various regional and sub-regional cultures". He sees some Mediterranean physical types mixed up with the autochthonous people of the Australoid type. The Bull, the Mother Goddess (nude), multiple pot burials, the long crested-ridge blades, the goblets project a close affinity with the West Asian types. "If a land route cannot or does not come up in the subsequent explorations in Rajasthan and the Punjab, one might think of a sea and river route through Broach along the Narmada".⁵⁰ On the other hand S.P.Gupta points to the contacts with Russian Central Asia and North China, in the development of North-West⁵¹ Neolithic (pit-dwellings, rectangular stone harvestors and holed axes, specialised bone tools and burials). The Vindhyan evidence (chopani Mando, Koldihawa and Mahagra) seeks to prove a somewhat native evolution of a Mesolithic into the Neolithic as early as 6th-7th millennium B.C. Rice was domesticated at this early period. Cord impressed pottery and ground tools show likeness to the Eastern Neolithic (Daojali Hading), which in turn were linked to Hoabinhian (South East Asia) and Jomon (Japan).

This only goes to indicate that any extraneous traits noticed among the Neolithic-chalcolithic settlements in the Northern, Central or Southern Deccan could only be at best through the Harappan or from the Harappan.

VI. MEGALITHIC CULTURE (circa 1200-500 B.C.)

At one time the Megalithic culture was largely confined to the Peninsular India south of Narmada but now its extent is traced in many areas right from Kashmir to Punjab (Leh valley too), Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Orissa as well. Settlements are few and living patterns rarely clear. The river banks and fertile lands were chosen for living, while wastelands and dry rocky areas for burial. Use of iron objects and iron technology was extensively known.



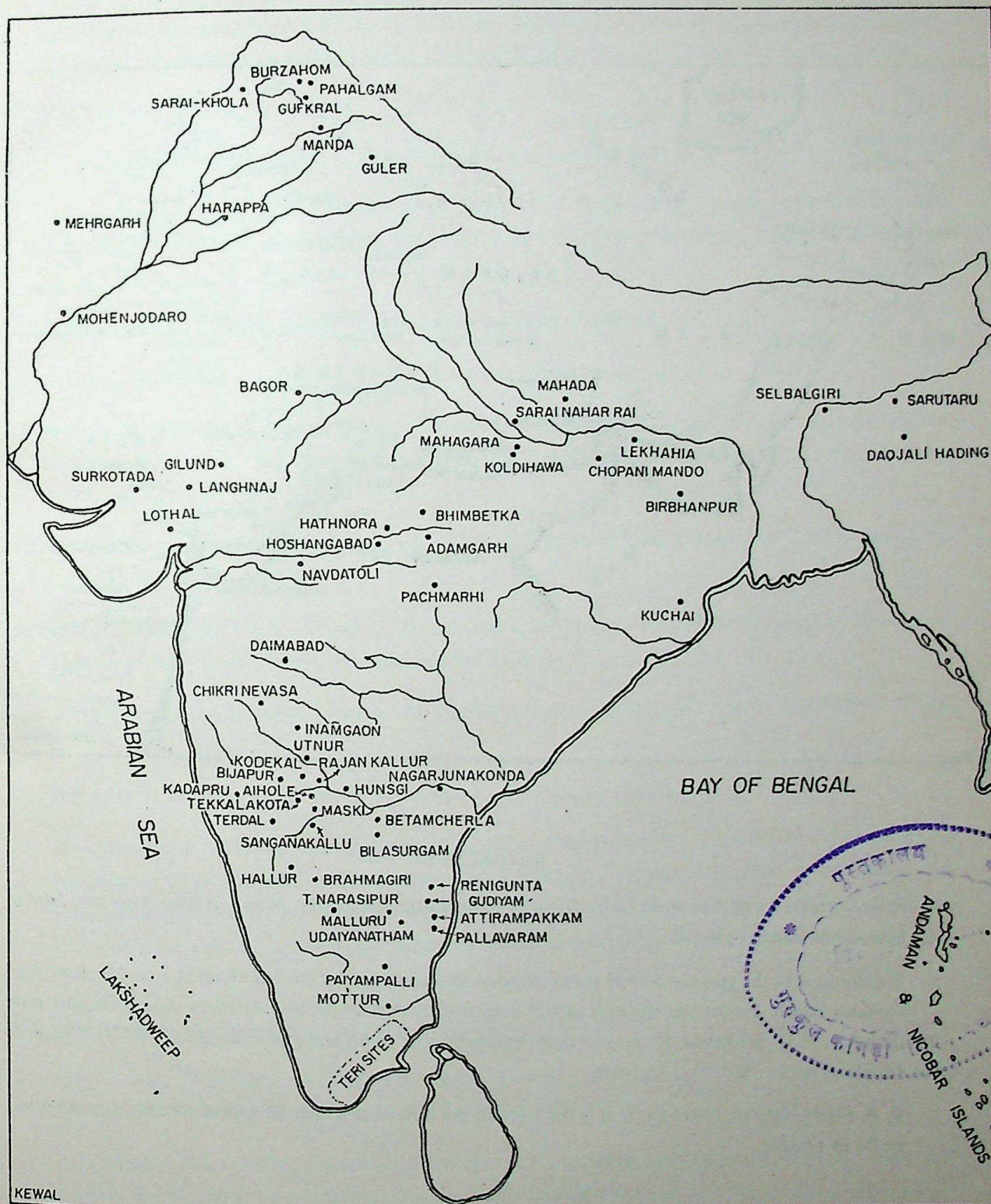
Scholars made attempts to trace the origins of Indian Megaliths to the West Asia and Europe. Heine Geldern⁵² opined that the original home was central Asia and reached India by overland routes. Heimendrof,⁵³ on the other hand, suggested a sea-route from the Mediterranean coast followed by a southward movement along the west coast of India. It is seen now on surface that burial grounds of Harappan civilization in Kutch possess cairn circles or stone lining around the graves and in some cases cists as well.⁵⁴ Structurally, therefore, the Kutch graves provide a linkage to the later Megaliths of Peninsular India.

N.R.Banerjee⁵⁵ sought the cairn burials of Baluchistan as the source for South Indian Megaliths through land route crossing the mountainous Vindhya. Allchins⁵⁶ feel that during the first millennium B.C. India received these influences by dint of maritime contacts with the Middle East. Basing on horse bits, bells of iron, jugs with spout, and most important, the pottery head-rests in the burials, S.P.Gupta⁵⁷ traced the origin to the gulf of oman and a sea-route was suggested during the first millennium B.C. for such early Indo-Egyptian contacts. A Sundara⁵⁸ has drawn Mediterrean parallels to the chambers-tombs of Karnataka. The claim of indigenous evolution of Megaliths from out of the preceding Neolithic-Chalcolithic settlements (Inamgoan, Bahal-Tekwada) could not, however, be ignored. The C-14⁵⁹ dates of Hallur and Komaranahalli (1400-1000 B.C.) show that iron was introduced in the South much earlier than in the North. Non-iron Megaliths in Chalcolithic contexts were reported from U.P.⁶⁰

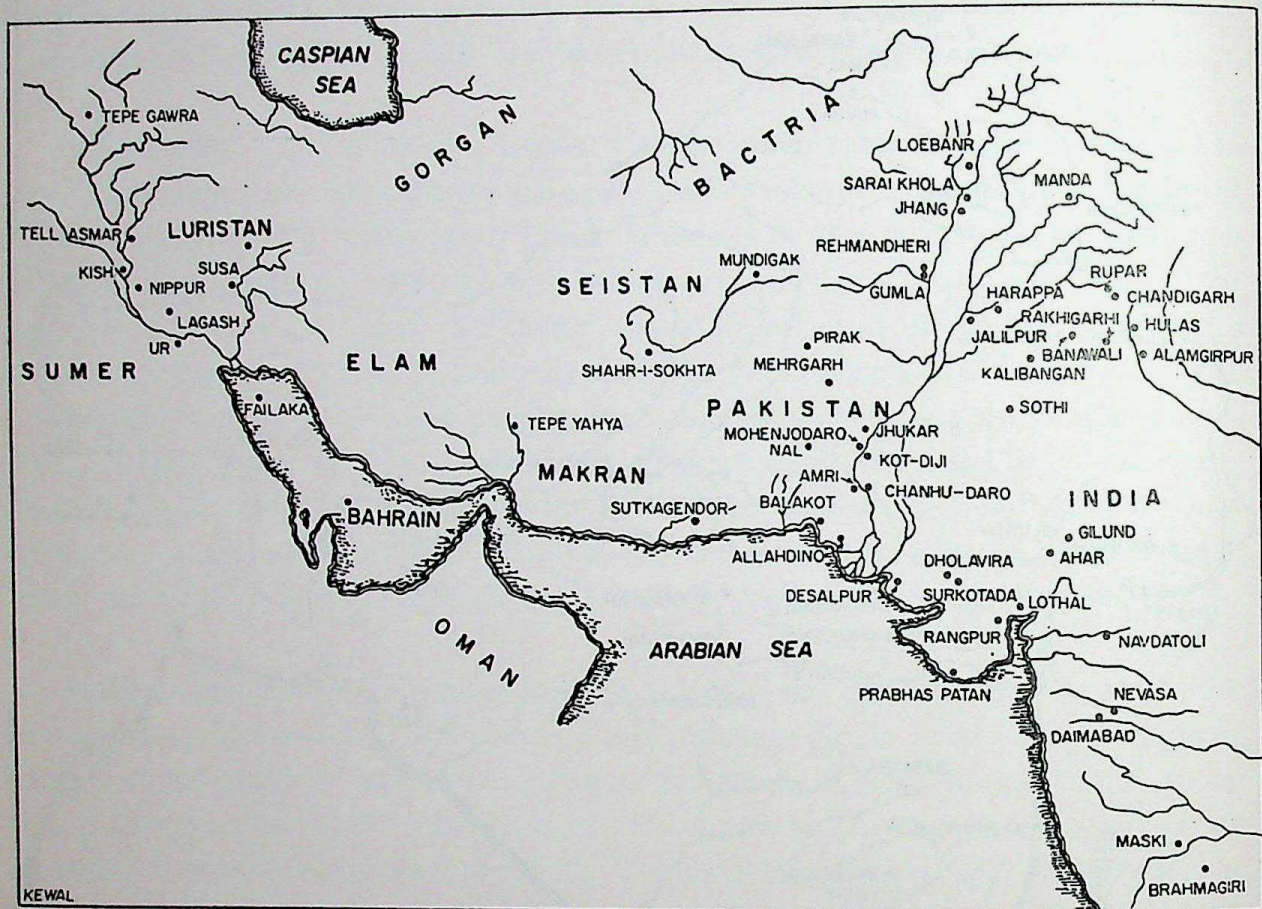
Massive anthropomorph figures in stone (3.25 metre high) planted within the Megalithic cairn circles at Mottur (Dist. North Arcot), Udaiyanatham (South Arcot), also at Malluru, Kadapru on the banks of Godavari, Kaperlaguru and Aihole in North Karnataka link up the ritual practice connected to⁶¹ Mother Goddess and to some extent the form is present among the copper hoard objects of North India. The elaborate decoration (copper sheets) over the horses and special burial given to this animal when dead, speaks of the important role of this animal. The tools of offence and defence like spikes, axes, tridents, swords were in large numbers. The horse riders were young males and an interesting analysis of the skeletons from⁶² Vidarbha Megaliths revealed "the incidence of the massive pilastering of the femora", of the young males due to riding on horse for prolonged periods.

Thus, Megaliths in India "appear⁶³ as a developing complex with several streams of influences combining in them" right from Mature Harappan times as seen from the surface evidences of Dholavira.

PRE & PROTOHISTORIC SITES (Fig. 1)



INDIA AND WEST (PRE-HARAPPAN TO POST-HARAPPAN) (Fig. 2)



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ROUTES AND TRAVELS IN EPICS

R.C.SHARMA

THE two great Epics—Ramayana and Mahabharata are the mines of information on various diverse subjects. These are the most important sources to reconstruct the history and culture of the post Vedic India. The Mahabharata for its immense imperativeness is also called as the Panchama Veda as whatever is stored in it may be found every where and whatever is not mentioned in this ocean of knowledge may not be seen anywhere. The routes and travels have also amply been recorded in these Epics.

The Ramayana mentions different types of routes viz., highways, roads, streets and the paths followed by the pedestrians. The road connecting different cities and kingdoms was generally known as Mahapatha (highway) which we now call Grand Trunk Road. There were two routes between Ayodhya and Girivraja (Giryak near Jalapur beyond the river Vyasa) in the ancient Kekaya land. The route followed by the messangers at the time of the demise of Dasaratha was through Hastinapur, Sarhind, Kurling (Saharanpur-Ambala), Bahlika (between Sutlej and Vyasa in Punjab). Four rivers had to be crossed i.e Ganga, Yamuna, Vyasa and Sutlej (Ay. 62.2-14). But the route followed by Bharata to reach Ayodhya was a different one. It was through Ravi, Sutlej and some other places the indentification of which is uncertain (Ay. 65.1-13). It appears that the route of the messangers was shorter but Bharata who had a contingent of army with him covered a different route.

Ayodhya was connected with Mithila to its east by a path which is mentioned when Visvamitra undertakes the journey with Rama and Lakshmana at the invitation of Janaka. They first camped at the bank of Sarayu then reached Siddhasrama (Buxer) from where they turned north and camped at the bank of Sonabhadra (Son). After a long journey they crossed the Ganga to enter Vaisali and reached Janakpur (Bal. 22.5-16, 23.1-18, 28.14-36, 30.15-18 34.1-6, 44.5-8).

Thus the entire highway between Mithila (Janakapura) and Kekaya (Girivraja) *via* Ayodhya was the ancient Uttarapatha main land route (Sthalamarga). This seems to have lost importance in the subsequent period as we find another route in the Greek and the Buddhist literature where the names of towns are different. It may be inferred that the route mentioned in Ramayana was mainly through forests while the latter route touched cities or townships which must have developed with the flourishing of trade and commerce.

The other important highway led to south (Dakshinapatha) and this finds mention when Rama was exiled to forest. From Sarayu he proceeded towards south and camped at the bank of Tamasa (probably Vedaśruti and not the other Tamasa where the Valmiki Asrama was situated) (Ay. 45.32-33). He continued his journey in the Southern direction and crossed Gomati (Ay.49.11) and also Syandika (Sai *Ibid.* 12) and then Ganga (Ay.50.12) near Srīngaverapura (*Ibid.*33) present Singraur which is 30 km. to west of Prayaga (Allahabad). After crossing the Ganga he proceeded towards east to the confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna (Ay.54.2). On the advice of sage Bharadvaja he left for Chitrakuta the distance of which is given as ten krosa (*Ibid.*28) although it is three times more. This difference remains a point of controversy.

The actual Dakshinapatha, however, begins from Rama's journey from Chitrakuta to further south. Visiting a number of hermitages and spending a number of years he reached Dandakaranya (Ar. 11.23-28) and settled at Panchavati on the bank of Godavari (Ar. 13.12-15). In search of Sita he moved from place to place in the south west and reached a dense forest which was not accessible to people. He then went to Janasthana, Kraunchavana, hermitage of Matanga, Sabari near Pampa which is identified as Hampi in Bellari District. He then proceeded to Rishyamuka hill (between. Ahmadnagar and Kalyani), Kishkindha (a place near Bellari), Malyavan, Sahya (Western Ghats) and ultimately reached Ramesvaram on way to Lanka.

The identification of these places is debatable but one can trace a route from North to South and the same developed into a trunk road in subsequent periods. We have a reference to suggest that the merchants of Ayodhya travelled to far off places to promote their trade (Ay.67.22). The main roads were connected with small roads leading to other cities.

Efforts were made to keep the roads useable when Bharata left Ayodhya for Chitrakuta to persuade Rama. His army consisted of a contingent which was skilled in road construction (Ay.79.13). Similarly when Rama returned to Ayodhya from Lanka the road from Nandigram to Ayodhya was repaired and improved (Yu.127.6-7). The roads in cities were kept well, swept daily and were also watered (Bal.5.8). The mention of Dipavriksha in Ayodhya (Ay.6.18) and Lanka (Lanka 3.19) suggests that the streets were lit at night. This must have been an added attraction for pilgrims and tourists to the urban areas.

Beside land routes the maritime routes were also availed of by the merchants who used to bring good presents like gems to the king (Ay.82.8). The statement is further corroborated

by the terms Maha Nau (sea vessel) and Nau-Patha (sea route). The situation of Lanka was such that it could be reached only through the sea route (La.3.21).

Air journeys has been described on several occasions. When Ravana abducted Sita he took the aerial route (Ar.54.7). Hunuman flew while crossing the sea to reach Lanka (see 1.1). He again flew from Lanka to the Himalayas to bring the Sanjivani (Ya.74.49-56). Angada and his retinue returned to Kishkindha by air after locating (Su.64.23-25). Air journeys were common for the Rakshasas. Vibhishana and his companions came to seek protection of Rama by the aerial route (Yu.17.2). These references, however, do not furnish any testimony to the use of aerial car. They knew the science or technique of floating in air. It is only the Pushpaka Vimana which can be called an aerial car. It was beautifully decorated with auspicious motifs and conditioned to climate and weather (Uttara.15.38-42). The aircraft was also known Khaga (Ar. 42.7) and Vimana (*Ibid.*9). It bore horrifying figures of demons. This was used by Ravana when he went to Maricha. It is possible that the Pushpaka Vimana itself was converted to this form as it is termed as Kamarupa.

The travels had different missions such as trade, marriage, hunting, site seeing, learning, pilgrimage, fair administration, royal mission and campaigns.

The Mahabharata incorporates innumerable references relating to travels and routes and these cover almost the entire Indian sub-continent. The pilgrimage of Arjuna commences from Khandavaprastha (Indraprastha=Old Delhi) from where he proceeds to Gangadvara or Haridvara (M.B.Ar.206.6), Bhrgutunga (a hillock in Nepal east of Gandaka) and Hiranyavindu (Himalayas). He then descends and comes to Namisharanya (Neemsar in Sitapur, Uttar Pradesh) and again goes up to Aparanada or Alakananda. He travels in plains and reaches Gaya, Anga (Eastern Bihar), Banga (Bengal), Kalinga and the sea (M.B. Ar. 207). In the southern direction he visits Pauloma and Karangham, Bharadvaja (all in the Pandya country), Agastya (Rameshwaram), Gokarna (near Goa), Prabhasa (Somanatha), Dwarka etc. He then reaches Pushkara (near Ajmer) and returns to Khandavaprastha (M.B.Ar.208).

Another pilgrimage which also was an all India tour was undertaken by all Pandavas with the sage Dhaumya (M.B. Ar.Ch.91-93). The route was almost the same but some other places have also been mentioned. The travels in the Mahabharata suggest a better planning.

The Epics furnish information about several regional routes also e.g. Mathura to Ayodhya (Ra.U. 65.68), Mithila to Ayodhya (Ra.Bal. 44.5-8), Hastinapur to Kashi (M.B.Adi. 96.3.44),

Hastinapur to Khandavaprastha (M.B.Adi. 199.26), Indraprastha to Panchala (M.B.Sebha 26.1-3), Kosal and Kashi (*Ibid.* 27.3-6) etc.

The Mahabharata records the Uttarapatha linking the Kingdoms of Kirata, Kamboja, Gandhara and Yavana (Santi 207.43) and the Dakshinapatha passed through Avanti, Rikshavati, Vidarbha leading to Andhra, Guha, Pulinda Madraka etc. (Vana. 61.21).

Beside roadways, maritime and air journies have also been described in different contexts. While the sea cruise must have fairly developed the nature of air travel remains obscure.

As gathered from the Epics travelling in those days was quite difficult. The robbers, dense forests, wild animals, difficult tracks, storms and other natural calamities were the frequent discouragements and only the brave and the resourceful undertook long voyages. This was equally true in respect of the land and the maritime routes.

About the priority to use a road we come across an interesting verse where Ashtavakra prescribes : 'The road is first for blind and deaf person, then for women and porter. A learned man should also get priority and not the king (M.B.3.133.1)'.

ROUTES FROM CHINESE ACCOUNTS AND CHINESE TRAVELLERS IN INDIA UPTO 550 A.D.

SAMIR KUMAR MUKHOPADHYAY

THE visits of voyagers, merchants, pilgrims, explorers between India and China in the early periods resulted in the strengthening of the cultural contacts between the two premier nations of the Orient. The first contact of China with shen-tu which denoted the Indian sub-continent was through Chang-kien, an emissary sent by Wu-ti, ruler of the Han dynasty (c. 146-87 B.C.). Towards the end of the 3rd Century B.C the rulers of this dynasty sought an integration of the country in view of the constant threat of the barbarian Huns (Hiang-nu) on the western fringes of the Chinese empire.

Chang-kien came to Trans-oxiana where the Yue-che capital was then located. He proceeded as far as Balk (Bactria) but his negotiation with the Yue-che could not yield any positive result. Although his mission to the western countries apparently proved unsuccessful, it had a far reaching consequence in opening up, for the first time, China to a new world. The report Chang-kien submitted to the emperor contained information on western countries such as Ta-yuan (Fergana), An-shi (Parthia), Ta-hsia (Bactria) and Shentu (Sindhu or Indus region). His travel report sheds interesting light on the history and culture of these little known countries. The routes to China, which opened up through these land masses, not only boosted trade and commerce but also established an effective cultural link between China and India. It has been rightly pointed out by Professor B.N.Mukherjee that Shen-tu though initially meant the lower Indus, gradually with the expansion of knowledge about India to the Chinese world, came to signify the Indian sub-continent of the time.

Chapter 96 of A and B of the Chien-han-shu (Annals of the Han dynasty) (1st century A.D.) furnished data about the routes followed from China through Central Asia reaching as far as Afganistan and Kashmir. Information relating to similar contact of China with India continued during the later Han dynasty as known from Hou-han-shu wherein we get reference of a Chinese ambassador named Pan-Young who arrived at T'ien-Chu (identified with Sindhu). It appears from the account of Strabo, Periplus and some Indian evidences that the Central Asian routes from China were also connected with the 'Great Route' from West Asia that passed through western India extending upto the interior of India. The latter route was known popularly as 'Uttarapatha' in Indian sources and 'Karapathi' in the Laghman Edict of Emperor Asoka. Further, from Kashgar ran another route down the mountain of Karakoram and through Gilgit to the valley of Kashmir and finally terminating at Taxila.

The most renowned and enterprising Chinese traveller Fa-hien visited India with the avowed purpose of collecting books relating to Buddhist discipline and to remove the imperfection from which it was then suffering in China. Fa-hien and his companions followed the northern route from Tunhwang to Lopnor and then traversing along the south east of Taklamakan desert, he reached Charchan and from Charchan to Khotan. The difficulties which they encountered in negotiating the rivers and the deserts on the way and the inhuman sufferings they endured during their long journey to India were immense. From Khotan the route laid through the hills to Karghalik and Tash-Kurghan and then traversing through difficult valleys and mountain passes, Fa-hien entered the valley of Kashmir and subsequently visited Peshawar and Taxila. In course of his travels in the North, he visited almost all the major centres of Buddhism as well as the places of pilgrimage. Thus his visit through the principal places in north India upto Tamralipta (modern Tamluk, Dist. Midnapore) helps us in charting the possible route followed by him. From Tamluk, he embarked on a large merchant vessel for his return journey to China *via* Sri Lanka and Java.

Immediately after the departure of Fa-hien for India another enthusiastic Chinese monk named Che-Mong resumed his journey for India from Ch'ang-mgan sometime in 404 A.D. He was accompanied by fourteen other Chinese monks. In Central Asia he visited Shen-shen (near Labnor), Kiutse (Kuchi) and Khotan. From Khotan, they went further south-west and after a hazardous and difficult journey over the Pamir mountain they reached, Bolan near Kashmir. Subsequently, he visited the prominent places of Buddhist interest in north India which included Kapilavastu, Kusumapura (Pataliputra). He returned to China in c.424 A.D. following the same route by which he came to India.

Another Chinese monk named Fa-Yong left for India on a pilgrimage with twentyfive Chinese monks. The route that he took was the northern overland route which passed over Turfan, Kuchar terminating at Khotan. Then he crossed the Pamir and entered Kashmir. On his return journey, he preferred the traditional and well known sea route (Nan-hai), to China.

Among the other Chinese visitors to India, Tao-Pu, Fa-Shing, Fa-Wei, Tao-Yo and Tao-T'ai deserve mention. Tao-Pau left for India by the Nan-hai (sea route) route but died while on way due to an unfortunate shipwreck. Tao-Yu visited India sometime between 425 to 451 A.D. He came as far as Sankyasya (modern village of Sankisa, Dist. Farukhabad, U.P.).

At the beginning of the 6th century A.D. (518 A.D.) an Empress of the Wei dynasty desired to send a mission to India to offer presents to the Buddhist sanctuaries and bring the Buddhist texts from India. Song-Yun, a monk was specially selected for this purpose. Another monk named Hui-Sheng accompanied him. Sang-Yun followed the southern route, passing over Shen-shen (near Labnor), Charchan and Khotan. From Khotan, he went to Karghalik, Wakhan and Chitral and afterwards following the valleys of Yasin and Gilgit he reached Bolan to the

north-west of Kashmir. The visit of Song-Yun was restricted to the north western part of India, particularly Uddiyan (the Swat valley) and Gandhara. He returned to China in 522 A.D.

I-Tsing, the famous Chinese monk and pilgrim (675-685 A.D.) in his famous book '*Ta-t'ang-si-yu-ku-fa-kao-seng-ch'uan*' (Memoirs) has referred to the travel routes and activities of fifty six pilgrims who either visited India or the adjoining region prior to his own visit to India in c. 675 A.D. with the aim of visiting sacred places or studying and collecting scriptures. Not all of them were native of China, some hailed from the adjoining countries as well. The notable among them were Hiuen-Yun-Chiu (who followed the southern route); Taou-Hi (visited Bodhgaya through Tibet following Tsang-Ko route); Sef-Pin, Hwui-Nich, Hiuen-Tao (entered through Tsang-Ko route), Shang-Tih, Tao-Lin, Tan-Kwang, Wou-Hing (followed the traditional Nan-hai route).

From the accounts of some of these pilgrims who preferred the maritime route to India, it appears that the sea-route was increasingly becoming popular more particularly from the Tsang period (c.618-917 A.D.). The seafaring vessels from the South-East coast of China passed over Gulf of Tonkin, South China sea, Strait of Malacca (lying between Malaya and Sumatra), Andaman Sea and then following the coast of Arakan (Burma) ultimately reached India. The first maritime contact of China with India is mentioned in a passage of Chien-han-shu. It speaks of a trading mission that left China and passed through different ports and ultimately terminated at the port of Huang-chi which may be identified either with Kanchi (Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu, or Gange (ancient Vanga, West Bengal). The trade aimed at bringing pearls, precious stones, tortoise shell etc. in exchange of gold dust and variegated kinds of silk produced in China

Evidence furnished in Kangtai (datable to the middle of the 3rd century A.D.) indicates that sea-going vessels used to bring horses from Central Asia to the Ko-Ying country. Ko-Ying has been identified by scholars either as the Malay peninsula or as Sumatra. Kang-tai in particular speaks of the Yueh-chin merchants "continuously importing horses to the Ko-Ying country." These merchants possibly brought these horses through north-western India to the Gange (ancient Vanga), which possibly served as the port of embarkation. This assumption has been put forward by B.N. Mukherjee through his recent decipherment of some interesting seals and sealings from Chandraketugarh (popularly known as Berachampa, 24-Parganas (North) bearing legends in Khorsthi as well as in the mixed script (misrita-lipi). Interestingly enough, three seals depicting sea-going vessels and with inscriptions in Khorsthi deserve mention, the contents may be summed up as follows: (a) journey in three directions by one Yosoda who earned wealth by sailing; (b) the ship belonging to 'dvijamya' referred to as the lord of the ocean; (c) vessel is called as Trapyagai. We know from Periplus that an ocean going vessel was known as *Trapaga*. Palaeographically these inscriptions are dated to the early centuries of the Christian era (1st to 3rd or 4th century A.D.). All these available data, according

to B.N.Mukherjee, tend to show that a certain community or several communities of traders migrated and got settled to this part of West Bengal from the traditional Khorsthi zone *i.e.* north-western India and they apparently brought Central Asian horses to Vanga for trading in the Ko-Ying country. We hope more discovery of materials in near future will strengthen this hypothesis of Mukherjee.

On the north eastern frontier, the Unnan province in South China was connected with the Indian sub-continent through Burma. There existed a few land routes to China passing through Burma, Assam and Bengal from early times of history. One route from China passed through upper Burma and entered Assam through Patkoi Range and then the Brahmaputra valley. The second route passed through Manipur and the third route through Arakan, and the Chittagong hill tract region. The first and the second route must have passed over Teng-chung (China) and Bhamo (Burma). These routes were in use till recent times. The contact between China and north-eastern India through Burma can be traced even to the Neolithic times as may be inferred from the discovery of certain variety of tools (particularly the Jadeite tools) in the Cachar hill region and elsewhere in Upper Assam.

The Ts'ang-Ko route from China passing through Tibet, Sadiya (Assam) and the Brahmaputra valley and ultimately terminating at Tirabhukti (North Bihar) was a well known route from the ancient times. I-tsing recorded that twenty chinese monks, long before him, left the Chinese mainland by the Ts'ang-ko route and made their way to Mo-Po-Pu-ti (Mahabodhi). According to Huilien's glossary the term 'Tsan-ko' was a name of a tribe dwelling in China. This route was not, however, frequented because of the hazards involved.

Thus there existed both land and sea routes between India and China from the early days. The land routes coming from the south and the north of the Tarim basin met on the Chinese frontiers at a place called Yu-men-kusan, being the biggest centre of Buddhist learning. The northern route passed over Shanshan, Turfan, Karsar, Kucha, Ak-su-Kashgar (Sherfu), and Yarkand (Soche). The southern route (Gateway of silk route) passed through Labnar, Donglik, Charchan, Keriya, Khotan, Gamo, Yarkand, Murgeb and Kashgrah. The northern route was further extended to Tashkent (Uzbek), Samarkand, Balk (Bactria), Kabul valley (Bamiyan), Nagrahar (Jalalabad), Peshawar valley and to the interior of India. The southern route was comparatively short and convenient, with some oasis. The routes from South China (Unnan) *via* Burma and Assam were in use from early times. The sea-route (Nan-hai) became popular from the 6th-7th century A.D. The Tsanko route was not in regular use.

INDIA AS SEEN BY HIUEN-TSANG

KIRAN KUMAR THAPLYAL

BORN in 600 A.D. in the province of Ho-nan in a Confucian family, Hiuen-tsang¹ entered a Buddhist monastery and mastered Buddhist philosophy at a comparatively age. Noting the sharp difference among the Buddhists of his country regarding the true nature of the doctrine of the Buddha, made up his mind to visit India and acquaint himself with the nature of the true religion.

His request for permission to leave China was rejected, but undaunted, he set off on journey to India in 629 A.D. Crossing the difficult terrain and braving physical hazards he visited many kingdoms and places like Ha-mi, turfan, Kara Shahr, Kucha, Issiq-kul region, Samarkand, Bactria, Balkh, Bamiyan, Kapisa, Nagarahara, Gandhara, Kashmir, Sakala, Chinabhukti, Jalandhara, Mathura, Thanesvara, Sankisa, Kanyakubja, Ayodhya, Prayaga, Sravasti, kapilavastu, Lumbini, Ramagrama, Kusinara, Varanasi, Vaisali, Pataliputra, Bodhgaya, Nalanda, Champa, Tamralipti, Amaravati, Kanchi, Nasik, Bharukachchha, and Valabhi. He also visited kamarupa.

While returning in 644 A.D., he carried with him Buddhist manuscripts and icons. After crossing Punjab, Kashmir, Kashgar, Yarkand, Khotan and Tun Huang, he reached China. The Chinese king, pardoning him for leaving the country without permission, accorded him a warm welcome and bestowed honours upon him. He spent his time in translating manuscripts, imparting instructions in Buddhist philosophy and writing his accounts of travels in India. He wrote a work *Si-yu-ki*, which has been translated in English by S. Beal as '*Buddhist Records of the Western world*'. Watters has translated the portion dealing with Hiuen-tsang as '*On yuan Chwang's Travels in India*'. Shaman Hwui-li, a desciple of Hiuen-tsang wrote his biography which has been translated by Beal as '*The Life of Hiuen-Tsiang*'. He died in 664 A.D.

POLITICAL CONDITIONS

Hiuen-tsang's account of political condition of Northern India is significant. He says that the country of India is divided into seventy kingdoms. The kingdom of Kapisa (north of Hindukush mountains) held sway over Lamghan, Nagarahara (Jalalabad), Gandhara and Bannu. The kingdom of Takshasila, Simhapura Urusa, Pan-nu-tso, and Rajapura were under Kashmir. To the east of Yamuna he refers to Matipura, Suvarnagotra, Nepal and Kamarupa. In central India there were the kingdoms of Bundelkhand, Gwalior, Malava, valbhi, Broach and Gurjara. Sindh also seems to have been an independent kingdom. Since Hiuen-tsang does not mention the political conditions of the kingdoms in the Punjab and the adjoining regions (*viz*, chinabhukti,

Jalandhara, Kuluta, Satadru) and a number of states in U.P., Bihar and Bengal it has been inferred that they formed part of Harsha's empire. The information is of great help in determining the extent of Harsha's empire.

REFERENCES TO EARLIER KINGS

Hiuen-tsang refers to several earlier kings. Asoka and Kanishka find frequent mention mainly in connection with the spread of Buddhist religion and philosophy, holding of Buddhist Council, enshrining Buddha's relics, and building *stupas* and monasteries and other monuments. He refers to King Sakraditya, his son and successor Budhagupta, Tathagatagupta, Baladitya and his son, Vajra.² Baladitya is generally indentified with Narasimhagupta Baladitya and Sakraditya was either Mahendraditya (i.e., Kumaragupta I) or a king of collateral branch of the Guptas.³ He informs that the Ceylonese king built a monastery at Bodhgaya with the permission from his Indian counterpart.⁴ He alludes to the Huna king, Mihirakula (whom curiously he places several centuries before) as a persecutor of Buddhism, and as one who was defeated, captured and later released by Baladitya, the Buddhist king of Magadha.⁵

REFERENCES TO CONTEMPORARY KINGS

Of contemporary kings Hiuen-tsang mentions Harsha as of Vaisya caste (*Fei-she*, taken by some for Bais Rajput) and refers to his expeditions and patronage of Buddhists and learned men.⁶ Bhaskaravarman, king of Kamarupa, was his friend, and the way he reacted to Harsha's letter, asking to send Hiuen-tsang to him, shows that he held Harsha in high regards.⁷ Dhruvabhata, king of valabhi, whom Harsha defeated, was his son-in-law and ally.⁸ He put the king of Jalandhara in "Sole control of matters relating to Buddhism in all India"⁹ and charge him to safely conduct Hiuen-tsang on his way back to China, to the frontiers.¹⁰ His requisitioning Buddha's tooth from king of Kashmir through threat of force¹¹ suggests his superiority if not authority over the Kashmir king. In 637 A.D. he refers to Sasanka, Harsha's arch enemy, as one who cut down the Bodhi tree, which was revived by Purnavarman, and died shortly before,¹² and catergorically states that Harsha had succeeded in defeating him.¹³ He mentions Pulakesin II, the Kshatriya king of Maharashtra, who could not be conquered by Harsha.¹⁴ He also throws some light, though vague, on the circumstances of Rajyavardhana's death.¹⁵

ADMINISTRATION

The king's tenants paid one-sixth of the produce. The royal revenues were divided into four parts : (1) expenses of government and state worship, (2) endowment of great public servants, (3) awards to men of intellectual eminence, and (4) gifts to various sects.¹⁶ Ministers and officials had their own portion of land and were maintained by the cities allotted to them.¹⁷ The pilgrim says, " As the government is generous, official requirements are few, families are not registered and individuals are not subject to forced labour contributions."¹⁸ "Everyone keeps to his hereditary occupation" Duties were light at ferries and border stations.¹⁹

Hiuen-tsang further informs us, "As the government is honestly administered and the people lived together on good terms the criminal class is small."²⁰ Or deals of water, fire, weight and poison were followed for determining the crime.²¹ For serious offences and plots against king, the punishment was life imprisonment,²² while in Fa-hien's time even second attempt at rebellion meant only loss of right hand. Even breach of social morality was punished by mutilation or exile.²³ The liberty of people was not unnecessarily restricted. Harsha's rule was just and humane. He forgot to eat and drink in the accomplishment of good work.²⁴ However, while Hiuen-tsang fell at the hands of brigands,²⁵ Fa-Hien, it may be noted, did not have to face such an ordeal. Separate custodians kept archives and records.²⁶ He also refers to Harsha's army as 60,000 elephant corps and one lakh cavalry, besides a large infantry.²⁷

SOCIO — ECONOMIC CONDITION

He refers to four orders of hereditary 'clan distinction'.²⁸ The Brahmanas were noted for purity and nobility, simplicity, frugality and learning, and such was their importance that India was called the country of Brahmanas.²⁹ Incidentally he also refers to a few Brahmanas as cultivators.³⁰ The Kshatriyas are referred to as the race of kings³¹ who made up the army and were known for their valour.³² However he also mentions kings of Brahmana, vaisya and Sudra *Varnas*.³³ The Vaisyas were engaged in trade and were wealthy.³⁴ He mentions Sudras as agriculturists³⁵ and makes no reference to their duty as serving the other *varnas*, which ancient literature prescribes for them. According to him, 'butchers, fishermen, public performers, executioners and scavengers have their habitations marked by a distinguishing sign. They are forced to live outside the city and sneak along on the left when going about in the hamlet'.³⁶ Earlier, Fa-hien had described the miserable plight of the Chandalas. Apart from the four 'castes'³⁷ Hiuen-tsang also mentions mixed castes which Watters takes to mean groups of low craftsmen.³⁸

He talks of virtuous, learned men, moving from place to place and leading a life of poverty, receiving their food by begging.³⁹ Brahmana students learnt the Vedas.⁴⁰ Hiuen-tsang says that a student began studies at seven, studied five sciences dealing with (1) grammar, (2) skilled profession, (3) medicine, (4) logic, and (5) the science of Internal (dealing with religion).⁴¹ In grammar, Panini's *Ashtadhyayi* and its abridged forms were studied. The Pilgrim refers to the high intellectual calibre and devotion of teachers and their sincerity in teaching.

Marriage with certain relations and relationship was prohibited - "Relations whether by the father's or mother's side do not intermarry."⁴² The "members of a caste marry within the caste."⁴³ Regarding the position of women in his time, Hiuen-tsang says that they were free in their movement, but never contracted a second marriage.⁴⁴ There is hardly any reference in his account to the use of veil by women. Quite interesting is the information that Suvarnagotra country was ruled by a woman.⁴⁵ In a city east of Sindh, women (*devadasis*) in constant succession performed music in the Sun temple.⁴⁶

Hiuen-tsang states that different customs were prevalent in different regions. The customs of the people of Mathura were good; those of the people of Thanesvara, liberal. He refers to Jainas who were skilled in divination.⁴⁷ People had faith in the religious merit of river Ganga,⁴⁸ and a tree at Prayaga, being considered sacred for suicide⁴⁹ and also in religious formulae.⁵⁰

Regarding the food and drinks of the people of India, the Chinese pilgrim says, "Milk, ghee, granulated sugar, sugar candy, cakes and parched grains with mustard oil are the common food; and fish, mutton, venison are occasional dainties The flesh of oxen, asses, elephants, horses, pigs, dogs, foxes, wolves, lions, monkeys, apes, is forbidden, and those who eat such food become *pariah*."⁵¹ Onions and garlic are little used and people who eat them are ostracised.⁵² curiously he also informs that Harsha in his travelling places had a ready supply of meals for the followers of different religions.⁵³ People took meals with their hands.⁵⁴ He refers to different types of wines used by the people of different *varnas*.⁵⁵ Betel-leaf chewing was a common practice.⁵⁶

He refers to different clothing according to the climatic variation. In northern India, with cold climate, close-fitting jackets, resembling those of the Tartars were used.⁵⁷ The clothes of kings and grandees were extraordinary.⁵⁸ Clothes were generally not tailored. He refers to the use of three-piece robes⁵⁹ and to men wearing *dhoti* in such a way that it covered the left shoulder but not the right one; while the women wore long robes covering both the shoulders.⁶⁰ The cloth was made of silk or linen, cotton or wool.⁶¹ People also used unguents⁶² and ornaments⁶³ and had different types of hair do.⁶⁴

One attacked by sickness gave up food for seven days and if he did not recover, he was given medicine.⁶⁵ He mentions people's faith in divine cure and refers to the curing of skin disease by worship and cleaning temple premises.⁶⁶ According to him medical treatment embraced formulae for protection, secret charms (Use of) medicinal stones, herbal medicines and acupuncture,⁶⁷ and also refers to the curative quality of sacred Buddhist sites. People were very careful about personal hygiene.⁶⁸

The most common mode of the disposal of the dead was cremation; other forms were water burial, or exposing body to wild animals.⁶⁹ Members of the family of the dead were considered unclean for some time.⁷⁰ The *bhikshus* did not bewail aloud the death of their parents, but read service, blessing the departed.⁷¹

Hiuen-tsang informs us about the narrow thoroughfares of the cities, walls of houses and monasteries coated with chunam, and floors plastered with cow-dung.⁷²

Indians, according to him, 'are of hasty and irresolute temperament, but of pure moral principles. They will not take anything wrongfully and they yield more than required. They

fear the retribution for sins in other lives and made light of what conduct produced in this life. They do not practice deceit and keep their sworn obligations".⁷³ The Chinese pilgrim states that the people of the middle kingdom had pure moral principles without practising deceit, and kept their obligations. He specifically praises the people of certain areas for their good qualities,⁷⁴ criticises others,⁷⁵ and lists some for good and bad traits.⁷⁶

Respect was shown to elders by *namaskara*, bowing, kneeling⁷⁷ etc. Circumambulation of objects of worship was common. He refers to alms houses and hospitals endowed from the munificence of people and kings,⁷⁸ and gives detailed description of the quinquennial distribution of gifts at Prayaga to the religious men, learned men and the poor.⁷⁹

Hiuen-tsang says that slavery was not practised in India⁸⁰ and forced labour was rare.⁸¹ The slaves in India were perhaps better treated than elsewhere and so to him the difference between a slave and servant might not have appeared very sharp.

He mentions certain fruits grown in India such as mango, *madhuka*, *jujube*, wood apple, myrobalan, plantain, coconut and jack fruit.⁸² He also names certain Chinese fruits not known in India⁸³ and also some which were specific to certain regions only.⁸⁴ Among agricultural crops are mentioned rice, wheat, ginger, mustard, etc.⁸⁵ Gold, silver, white jade, and crystal lenses are mentioned as products of mines.⁸⁶

Hiuen-tsang says, 'Rare precious stones of various kinds from the sea-ports are bartered for merchandize. But in the commerce in the country gold and silver coins, cowries and small pearls are the media of exchange.'⁸⁷

RELIGIOUS CONDITION

He visited sacred Buddhist sites, studied at the feet of learned scholars and copied Buddhist texts. In total he mentions about four thousand monasteries with about 1,50,000 monks residing in them. He pilgrim records that in some areas the people were followers of Hinayana,⁸⁸ and in others of Mahayana⁸⁹ school of Buddhism. He also mentions areas where followers of both the sects lived side by side, even in the same monastery which could have been possible if all the resident monks followed a common code of religious rules. He refers to some Mahayanists who followed the Hinayanist *Vinaya*.⁹⁰ Followers of both the sects maintained high intellectual standard.⁹¹ In some areas followers of Brahmanical and Buddhist faiths resided side by side amicably.⁹² He refers to eighteen Buddhist schools, and mentions Sammitiya as the most popular of the Hinayana schools.

Hiuen-tsang stayed at Nalanda, the most important monastic centre of education and learning, for a couple of years.⁹³ He refers to the monasteries founded by Sakraditya and other

kings.⁹⁴ He gives graphic account of its surrounding wall, gateways, towering, multi-storied and graceful building, strict and meticulous rules of admission and discipline, large number of teachers (about 1,000, with Silabhadra as the head, from whom he learnt Buddhist philosophy) and taught (about 10,000) including several from foreign countries, its busy lecture schedules of at least hundred lectures a day ('Learning and discussing they found the day too short,' as he says), its source of income (charitable endowments made by rulers and the prosperous gentry), strict adherence of members to rules, and its widespread fame, its members, being models for others, treated with respect, and cosmopolitan character in matters of education and learning. He refers to prominent teachers of the past as well as of his time.⁹⁵ His description of the Mahabodhi temple (Bodhgaya)⁹⁶ tallies with the extant temple indicating that later renovations followed the original scheme.

Though Hiuen-tsang tries to portray bright picture of Buddhism, his account also shows that in many places Buddhism was showing signs of decline. He describes the monasteries of certain regions as in ruins.⁹⁷ In Vaisali, Pundravardhana, Samatata, Kalinga, and a few other places, Jainas were in fairly large number. He mentions the existence of large number of Brahmanical. (mostly Saiva) temples in different regions⁹⁸ and indicates that in some places the adherents of Brahmanical faith outnumbered the Buddhists.

He gives graphic account of Kannauj Assembly,⁹⁹ the meeting of a large number of Buddhist and non-Buddhist scholars, kings and grandees, besides others, the erection of high tower enshrining Buddha image, the grand procession of the Buddha image, the lavish feast to scholars and others, the nomination of Hiuen-tsang as 'Lord of discussion', the plot of the Hinayanists against the Chinese pilgrim¹⁰⁰ due to jealousy, and of non-Buddhists against Harsha¹⁰¹ for his undue favour to Buddhists and neglect of other sects. His account of the quinquennial assembly at Prayaga is also fairly detailed. He refers to the gathering of about five lakh people¹⁰² and several scholars of all faiths, to Harsha's worshipping Buddha, Sun and Siva, and to his distributing everything (including his dress and ornaments) in charity to the followers of different faiths and to the orphans and the poor.¹⁰³

OBSERVATIONS ON HIUEN-TSANG'S ACCOUNT

Hiuen-tsang had a fanatic devotion to Buddhism, faith in its inherent superiority over other religions, and also in the supernatural phenomena in Buddhist myths, and, as such, saw everything with a Buddhist eye. His depiction of Sasanka as a cruel persecutor of Buddhism¹⁰⁴ is incompatible with his information that Buddhism was flourishing in his capital, Karnasuvarna.¹⁰⁵ Hiuen-tsang refers to Harsa as a staunch Buddhist, who banned meat-eating,¹⁰⁶ erected stupas and monasteries,¹⁰⁷ and rest houses, patronised Nalanda monastery,¹⁰⁸ offered charities to the Buddhist scholars¹⁰⁹ in the yearly assembly at Kannauj,¹¹⁰ fed them¹¹¹ and not only gave them preferential treatment over other sects, but even treated non-Buddhist sects discourteously. This however, is not in harmony with Harsha's cosmopolitan outlook as described by him in

connection with the Prayaga Assembly and also with the epigraphic evidence which categorically refers to him as Saiva (*Parama Mahesvara*¹¹²).

Sometimes he has confused the issue. For example he describes Harsha's predecessors as king of Kannauj¹¹³ while it is known for certain that Kannauj was under the Maukharis before the ministers of that state offered it to Harsha. Hiuen-tsang's account would show that in 643 A.D. Harsha had been ruling for about thirty years,¹¹⁴ i.e., he came to throne in c. 612 A.D., while other sources would favour 606 A.D. for the same. His observations on caste system, slavery, and his enumeration of the Vedas and their subject matter are defective. However, since he stayed in India for fifteen years visiting places, meeting people, studying philosophy, his account is much more valuable than of the other foreign writers whose information was based on hearsay, and the historians can ill-afford neglecting his account in the reconstruction of ancient history and culture of India.

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40. Watters, I, 159; Beal, *Records*, I, 79. Though his knowledge of the contents of the vedas is not accurate (Watters, I, 159).
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42. Watters, I, 168.
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45. Watters, I, 330; Beal, *Records*, I, 199.
46. Watters, II, 254.
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48. *Ibid.*, I, 319, 364; Beal, *Records*, I, 234.
49. Watters, I, 362.
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74. E.g., Ahichchhatra (Watters, I, 332), Matipura (*ibid.*, 322), Govishana (*ibid.*, 330), Varanasi (*ibid.*, II, 47), Ghazipur (*ibid.*, II, 59), Vaisali (*ibid.*, II, 63), Magadha (Beal, *Records*, II, 82), Kamarupa (*ibid.*, II, 186).
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90. The Buddhist of Udyana (Watters, I, 226).
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93. For the description of Nalanda, see Watters, II, 164 ff; Beal, *Records*, II, 171 ff; *Life*., 111 ff.
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98. E.g., 1,000 at Varanasi (Beal, *Records*, II, 44); 100 each at Sravasti (*ibid.*, II, 2), Samatata (*ibid.*, II, 196), Kamarupa (*ibid.*, II, 196), Dhanyakataka (*ibid.*, II, 221), Malava (*ibid.*, II, 261), and Kalinga (*ibid.*, II, 208), etc.
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105. Watters, II, 191.
106. Beal, *Records*, I, 214.
107. Watters, I, 344; Beal, *Records*, I, 214.
108. Beal, *Life*, 112.
109. Watters, I, 344; Beal, *Records*, I, 214. He offered eighty townships of Orissa to the Buddhist scholar Jayasena (*Life*, 154).
110. Watters, I, 344.
111. Watters, I, 344; Beal, *Records*, I, 214.
112. See the Banslkhera Copper-plate Inscription (vide K.K. Thaplyal, *Inscriptions of the Maukharis, Later Guptas, Pushpabhutis and Yasovarman of Kanauj*, p. 176) and the Madhuban Copper-plate Inscription (*ibid.*, p. 182 ff.). It is possible that the bereavement in the death of his father, mother, brother, brother-in-law and brother in quick succession, the bloodshed involved in his military campaigns, the influence of his brother, sister and brother-in-law who were Buddhists and of the Buddhist scholars, Divakaramitra and Hiuen-tsang, and the anti-Buddhist activity of Sasanka, his arch enemy, would have made him lean towards Buddhism.
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FIVE INDIES THROUGH HUICHAO'S EYES: THE JOURNEY OF A KOREAN-CHINESE BUDDHIST MONK, c.A.D.723-727 AND ITS HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

S.G. BAJPAI

OF the numerous Buddhist pilgrims from East Asia who visited India over one thousand year period of active cultural interaction between China and India, Huichao, is among the six Chinese and Korean, who have left us with substantial record. The names of these pilgrims were Fa Hsien, Sung-yun, Hsuan Tsang, I-tsing, Huichao, and Wukong. While others have been justly memorialised both in ancient literature and modern histories of ancient India, Huichao alone stands ignored. He was an ordinary monk devoid of literary accomplishments and Buddhist scholasticism. But his exploits were no less, and in many cases, more remarkable than his predecessors and successors with the probable exception of Hsuan Tsang. He left for India by sea-route in 723 and returned by overland route through central Asia reaching Kucha in December 727. According to a reckoning of travel times gleaned from his fragmentary *Memoir of a Pilgrimage to Five Regions of India*, he walked literally thousands of miles during two out of his four year's pilgrimage. The routes that he scaled were hazardous indeed and the courage they required of our pilgrim was also formidable. Huichao gave in to his emotions a few times as a result of homesickness and the terror of long distance, shedding tears at least once over the insurmountable hardships of journey through Northern Afghanistan and over the Pamirs. He did succeed in completing his pilgrimage and lived for over 80 years, devoting his life to the practice and preaching of Tantric Buddhism.

Of his India travels, which covered all five Regions, we have only a brief account in a fragmentary manuscript discovered in 1908 by Pelliot. It was subsequently translated into German in a hard to find publication in 1938-39 and an yet unpublished English version by Han Sung Yang and Yun Hua Jan some years ago.

Huichao's *Memoir* is remarkable for its simple and straightforward narrative but extremely disappointing in the lack of the precise data on his journeys, which make the task of reconstructing his routes largely speculative. I have, therefore, refrained from delineating his routes except where it is possible due to the nature of terrain such as in Afghanistan. Huichao's extant text describes over thirty countries in India and Central Asia as well as his questionable visit to Persia and the Arab Syria. Within India, it is frustrating to find Huichao's silence on the descriptions of the intervening places and unlike his illustrious predecessor Hsuan Tsang whose *Si-Yu Ki* served as a model, Huichao seldom even mentions capital sites.

Although the *Memoirs* have valuable ethnographic, cultural, and religious data, especially on languages, customs, economic products, and natural characteristics of the countries visited, the most striking information relates to the political developments noted in the pilgrim's personal narrative. He carefully writes about the political changes of the countries he visited and highlights such information regarding contemporary happenings.

Our knowledge of Five Indies is, however, incomplete since the fragmented manuscript begins only at Vaisali, thus depriving us of what Huichao had to say about the Eastern Region. He more often than not describes the political regions underscoring the extent of powers achieved by the king Central, South, West, and North India. He apparently found military strength dependent on the elephant force, which he carefully notes such as the king of Central India had 900 elephants and his chieftains having 200 to 300 each, that of South India 800, of West India 500 to 600, of North India of Jaindhara 300 and the king of Kashmira also 300. This is significant because the weaker ruler as recorded by Huichao, submitted to a more powerful invader, concluding a treaty stipulating annual tribute, thus avoiding carnage on the battlefield. Huichao seem to give credence to the conclusion that the kings of mainland India did not have cavalry, at least a strong one, and relied for victories on their elephant corps.

He further notes the political dependencies of prominent powers and provides eye-witness testimony to the contemporary events such as Jalandhara being a bone of contention between the kings of Central India and Kashmira, independence of Magdha in 724 A.D.; the overlordship of the Chalukyas of Badami; the invasions of the Tajjikas (the Arabs) of Western India and the Arab conquest of half of Sindhu as well as their expansion in Persia, Northern Afghanistan, and Central Asia.

Of particular significance are his details concerning the Tibetan power in the Trans-Himalayan regions, and their conflict with China over territories, especially the Tarim basin. He also notes rather meticulously the Chinese expansion and chiefdoms that submitted to them in Kashmira and the regions of Afghanistan and Trans-Himalya. The Chinese had started military preparation to thwart the Tibetan designs for paramountcy in the Himalayan and Pamir regions as well as the Tarim basin on the one hand and the Arabs on the other.

Huichao's *Memoirs* were to serve the cause of the Buddhist pilgrimage. Hence he carefully noted without fail the prevalence of Buddhism or lack thereof in each country and place he visited. Throughout the historical India and adjacent countries, both the knowledge and practice of Buddhism as well as the policy and attitude of the rulers, the chiefs, and the common people towards the Three Jewels were faithfully recorded by Huichao. He paid particular attention to the practice of donating villages along with their inhabitants to the Buddhist monasteries as well as temples. Udyana in North *i.e.* North West India was a very special case where virtually all the villages and their inhabitants had been donated to the Buddhist monasteries. Huichao

claims that the population of the monks slightly exceeded the number of the laymen there. However, unlike Hsuan Tsang he does not employ a historical approach to recording the condition of Buddhism, thereby showing any changes from the past to his times, although Huichao creates the impression that Buddhism was flourishing everywhere in India, he also notes with profound sorrow the poor state of several prominent Buddhist holy places and the condition of their disrepair or non-restoration probably during the aftermath of the ruinous Huna invasions. This more than anything else grieved Huichao, the Buddhist pilgrim par excellence, and he expressed his feelings in the following verse:

Not troubled how far is the distance to Mahabodhi,
Nor I am afraid the Deer Park is far away
Only the dangerous way grieved me
But I do not care about (how) the evil wind blows
To visit the eight stupas is certainly not an easy task
(and his profound sorrow at what he found)
All places were burnt
How then could one's desire be fulfilled?
With my own eyes I saw it this morning.

To paraphrase what Watters' says about Hsuan Tsang, which is equally apt for Huichao, we can say :

"His faith was simple and almost unquestioning... He always wanted to have his own personal testimony, the witness of his own sense, or at least his personal experience... Partly because or pilgrim was too ready to believe, though partly also for other reasons, he did not make the best use of his opportunities. He was not a good observer, a careful investigator, or a satisfactory recorder, and consequently he left very much untold which he would have done well to."

To conclude, while Huichao was not a celebrity, his contributions to history of India and Central Asia as well as Buddhism are both striking and valuable. Having been rediscovered, Huichao would remain as a luminary among the Chinese Buddhist pilgrims and no amount of the saga of interaction between China and India in general and the 8th century history of India in particular will ever be considered complete without his *Memoir of a pilgrimage to the Five regions of India*.

INDIAN TRAVELLERS ABROAD

C. 700 TO 1200 A.D.

B.K.KAUL DEAMBI

INDIA played a significant role in the international cultural exchanges from pretty early times which contributed to the growth of the important world civilisations. The natural barriers of India both overland and maritime never posed any insurmountable problems to the travellers and they neither checked any outside infiltration of men, material and ideas into India nor stood in the way of the expansion of the Indian civilisation to the outside world. In this paper an attempt has been made to give a brief account of the Indian travellers who went to China, Central Asia, Tibet and Bagdad during the period c.700 to 1200 A.D. and contributed to the growth of the cultural and commercial relations between India and the outside countries in the north, east and west. Incidentally references would be made to the routes through which these travellers passed to reach their destinations.

CHINA

The regular commercial intercourse, both by land and sea, between India and China, started long before the beginning of the christian era. When the famous Chinese envoy Chang Kien visited Bactriana in 138 B.C., (127 according to some), he saw to his great surprise the Chinese bamboo and textiles being sold in the open market. On enquiry he learnt that these had been brought by Indian traders through northern India and Afghanistan after having originally obtained them from South Eastern China through Yunnan (or Sian) and Burma. Chang Kien's report brought home to the Chinese emperor the necessity of opening up routes to India and the Western countries. Ousting the Hunas from the western borders of China, and gaining control of Central Asia to the immediate West by series of military operations, the routes leading towards the west and India through Central Asia were opened. With the opening of the routes, traders from all directions began to pour into the Chinese empire. The trade caravans were followed by religious missionaries and cultural emissaries.

OVERLAND ROUTE

The principal overland route opened since the Han times passed through Central Asia. The route starting from North Western India proceeded along the Kabul valley and passed by Hidda and Jalalabad to reach Bamiyan on the foot of the Hindu Kush. Crossing the Hindu Kush the route brought the travellers to Bactria (modern Balkh), called Fo-ho by the ancient Chinese, and Vahlika by the Indians. From Bactria, two different roads led to Central Asia and China. One passed northwards and proceeded through ancient Sogdiana, the land between the Amu and the Syr Darya in the territory now called Soviet Central Asia. Crossing the Syr Darya (Jaxartes), it moved towards the north and across the passes of the Tien-Shah, it reached Uch-Turfan to the north of the Tarim Basin. The other shorter road which was more frequented

by the travellers, passed through Badakshan and Wakhan, and by difficult passes of the Pamirs reached Kashghar, a plain to the west of the Tarim Basin or Taklamakan. A shorter route from Kashmir passed through the north of Gilgit and Yasin valleys upto Tashkurghan where it joined the other route proceeding towards Kashghar. Another shorter route from Kashmir led from Leh across the Karakoram passes to Yarkand on way to Kashghar.

Kashghar now in Chinese Central Asia was important in the journey to China. After the arduous journey across the high cliffs and difficult passes, the travellers rested here for some days before resuming their journey to China. From Kashghar two different routes went up to the frontier of China one along the southern fringes of the Tarim Basin and the other along the north. On the southern route grew up the prosperous states of Kashghar, Yarkand, Khotan, Dandan Klik, Endere, Niya and Miran which played a significant role in the trade and cultural relations between China and India and between China and the western countries. The States through which the northern route passed were Tumchug, Bharuka, Aksu, Kucha, Kara Shahar and Turfan, all contributing significantly towards the rich cultural exchanges between India and China.

Both the routes along the northern and southern fringes of the Taklamakan met on the Chinese frontier at a place called Yu-men-Kuan or the "Jade gate". Not far from it was situated the famous Tun-huang, a border town destined to play an important role in cultural exchanges between India and China. From the Jade gate the route went to Chang-an, present day Sian in the interior of China.

From Bactria the road to the west passed through Merv, Nishapur, Hamdan and Bagdad and reached the Medeterranian coast. From there the ships carried the merchandise to Rome and Alexandria.

It will be seen that Chang kien was responsible for the opening of the world's oldest highways connecting China with the West, and with India. The same highway is also popularly known by its modern name the silk road, the phrase coined in the last century by a German Scholar Baron Ferdinand Von Richthofen.

Two other overland routes connected India to China. However, these routes were difficult of access as they lay through very rugged and difficult terrain and barren tracts of land with extreme paucity of food and drink. One of these passed through Assam, Upper Burma and Yunnan and the other through Nepal and Tibet.

MARITIME ROUTE

India was connected to China also by the sea. The details of the maritime route from India to China can be had from the travel accounts of Fa-hien who returned to China *via* this route.

Starting from Pataliputra (Patna) Fa-hien followed the course of Ganges and descending eastwards he found on the northern bank of the river the great kingdom of Champa (Bhagalpur). Continuing his journey eastwards he came to the country of Tamralipti, the capital of which bore the same name (Tamluk to the north of Orrisa) and was a great port. From Tamralipti he travelled to Ceylon and from here he went to Java on way to Canton in China.

However to avoid long voyages through the open sea, the merchants took a safer route along the coast and found a port named Takkola on the Malay Peninsula from where they travelled overland to Siam and Cambodia. Soon after acquainting themselves with the conditions in the Far East the Indian sailors sailed round the Peninsula and went upto Tonkin, the principal port of China in the south east. Soon Tonkin a protectorate, and not an integral part of the Empire was abandoned in favour of Canton which soon developed into a major southern port of China.

BUDDHIST MISSIONARIES

The foundation of the cultural bonds between China and India was laid by the Buddhist missionaries. These missionaries travelled through the rugged and difficult terrain of high cliffs and barren deserts, and reached Central Asia and China carrying with them the torch of Indian civilization and culture. The story of these noble sons of India are nowhere recorded in detail but have been bequeathed to us by the Chinese historians. The first Indian missionaries to visit China were Dharmarakshita and Kasyapa Matanga who went to China in the third quarter of the first century during the reign of the Emperor Mingti of the Han dynasty. They were followed by a succession of Indian monks mostly from Kashmir the celebrated seat of Buddhist learning, in the subsequent centuries whose detailed accounts are available to us but are beyond the scope of the present paper. We may attempt a brief survey of the activities of the Buddhist savants who carried to China the message of the Enlightened during the period with which we are presently concerned.

The most glorious period in the history of China was that of the Tang rulers who came to power in 618 A.D. and held complete sway over whole of the China upto 907 A.D. During this period the cultural and commercial ties between India and China were closest than in any other period. Indians were seen in pretty large numbers, such as merchants, travellers, missionaries and emissaries in the metropolitan cities of China.

Kashmir ceased to play an effective role in the cultural transmission from India to China after the 5th century, and its place was taken by Nalanda which grew up as a great international centre of Buddhism in the 5th century. The Buddhist savants to visit China after 5th century were mostly from this university. The first great scholar of this university to visit China was

Prabhakaramitra who after converting the western Turkish Chief of Central Asia to Buddhism, went to China towards the end of the year 627.

Among the Buddhist scholars who went to China during the period under survey, was the most notable Bodhiruci. A Buddhist monk of southern India Bodhiruci joined a Brahmanical school but later during a discussion with a Buddhist scholar named Yasaghosa, embraced Buddhism. Accepting the invitation of the Chinese envoy at the Chalukya court in 692 A.D., he travelled by the sea route, and reached China in 693. He commenced the work of translation in the same year with the help of Indian monks, Brahmana the ambassador of the king of Central India, Canda who hailed from North Western India, Is'vara who came from Eastern India and Prajna Gupta who hailed from South India. Bodhiruci translated in all 73 Buddhist texts the most important of which was a Mahayana text, Ratnakuta, the translation of which he completed in 713 A.D. This was his last work of translation and there after passing his days in meditation, he died in 727 A.D. at Lo-yang.

Another important Buddhist teacher to visit China after Bodhiruci was Vajrabodhi, the third son of Is'ana-Varman king of Central India. He studied at Nalanda and Vallabhi, the important centres of Buddhist learning during the period. After staying with the Pallava king Narasimhavarman at Kanchi for sometime as the latter's teacher, he went to Sri Lanka and from there as a member of the Sri Lankan mission to China. He reached Canton in 720 A.D. Vajrabodhi was the first Buddhist scholar to introduce and propagate *Tantrayana* in China and translated a number of texts on the subject. Vajrabodhi died at Lo-yang in 732 A.D. His work was continued by his principal disciple Amoghavajra better known in China under his Chinese name Pu-kong. He studied *Tantrayana* with Bodhiruci and was with him at Lo-yan from 724 to 731. Instructed by his mentor to collect more Indian texts on the subject, he returned and stayed in the Dantavithara (Sri Lanka) for a period of three years studying the mystic doctrines. Entrusted with the task of carrying presents of Buddhist texts to the Emperor of China he returned to China and stayed there till his death in 774 A.D. incessantly and arduously carrying on his mission of propagating the mystic Buddhism. He wrote to the Emperor in 771 a few years before his death, "From my childhood I followed my teacher Vajrabodhi for 14 years (719-732) and was initiated by him in the practice of Yoga. I then went to India and made a collection of 500 texts which I brought back to China. I returned to China in 746. Since then uptill now I have translated 77 texts consisting of 120 chapters."

Relations between India and China suffered a set back in the latter part of the Tang period owing to political disturbances in China. Travel by both the over land and sea routes became difficult. However, some rulers of the Song dynasty (A.D. 960-1279), did try to revive the old traditions and some activity in this behalf was witnessed towards the end of the 10th and the beginning of the 11th century. To keep up the torch of Buddhism alive the Indian monks K'o-che, Fa-hien, Chen-li and Su-ko-to accompanied by forty other monks of western India came to Ch'ang-ngan in 972. In 973 a monk of Nalanda named Fa-t'ien (Dharmadeva) came

to China and received great honours from the Chinese Emperor. After translating a large number of Sanskrit texts into Chinese, he died in China in 1001. From Western India a prince named Manjusri, and a monk named Kisiang reached the Chinese capital in 977 and participated in the translation work. In the same period T'ien-si-tsai, a native of Kashmir, She-hu a native of Udyan (Swat Valley) and Hu-lo a monk of Central India came to the capital. The Chinese Buddhist Encyclopedia has preserved the names of host of Indian monks who visited China during this period but no information about them save their names has been furnished. They were: Yong-she who came between 984 and 987, Pu-t'o-ki-to (Buddha-kirti) who came in 989, Kia-lo-shen-ti (Kalasanti or Santikara?) who came from Central India in 995, Ni-wei-ni of Central India and Fo-hu (Buddharaksa) of Western India, both of whom came in 999, Fa-hu (Dharma-raksa) of Western India and Kie-hien of Northern India who came in 1004, Mu-lo-she-ki of Kashmir and Ta-mo-po of western India in 1005, Ching-to of Western India and Kio-kie of Central in 1010, Che-hien of Western India, Tin-kio of Udyan, Tong-shou of Central India, Pu-tsi of Bengal and many others in 1016. According to Chinese chroniclers at no period of history were to be seen so many Indians in China as at the close of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh century A.D. Owing to the strenuous hard work put in by these savants of India, the Chinese Buddhist collection was enriched by 201 volumes between 982 and 1011.

The Indian monks who were the last to visit China were Ngai-hien-che, Sin-hu and their companions from western India in 1024, five monks including Fa-kilsiang in 1027 and Shan-cheng and eight others in 1036. The original name of these savants cannot be restored with any amount of certainty. In some cases the Indian monks seem to have adopted pure Chinese names. The frequent visits to China by the Indians witnessed a sharp decline towards the later half of the eleventh century probably due to the decline of Buddhism in the land of its birth. "The number of Buddhist monks and nuns in China in A.D. 1021 were respectively 3,97,615 and 61,240 in 1034, 3,85,520 and 48,740, but in 1068 only 2,20,660 and 34,030."

Besides Buddhist religion and literature, the Indian travellers to China carried with them the knowledge of Indian art, music, painting, astronomy and astrology, medicine etc. Indian artists were held in great esteem in China even as late as the Yuan period. An account of an Indian artist named A-ni-ko is furnished by the Chinese sources. Born in Nepal in A.D. 1243, he acquired mastery in designing, modelling and metal casting at a very young age. Having successfully completed the construction of a golden Pagoda in Tibet he went to China where the Chinese Emperor Kublai highly impressed by his attainments conferred several honours on him. At the orders of the emperor, he did a lot of conservation work in the royal palace, repairing the old statues and making fresh ones for different monasteries of the Empire. He rose to the position of the controller of Imperial manufacturers and was honoured with many posthumous titles even after his death. Traditions of Indian iconometry handed down by him continued in China for a long time. Like the Indian artists the Indian painters were also held in great esteem in China. The names of three Indian painters have been handed down by the

Chinese sources. They are Sakyabuddha, Buddhakrti and Kumarabodhi. The details of their activities in China, however, are not fully known. The Indian music was also very popular in China and the Indian musicians were in great demand at the Chinese court. The Tang annals give a description of the Indian orchestra in the following words:

"The musicians use a cap of black cloth. They put on silken white tunic, violet coloured breeches of brocade and a red mantle. The dancers are two in number. They have their hair plaited and they put on a *kasaya* of Ch'ao-hia similar to the dress of the monks. They walk with shoes made of ropes and green hemp. For the music they use the gong (tongku), the drums called *kil*, *mao-yuan* and *tu-t'an*, the cornet of reed called *pi-li*, the transversal flute called *heng-ti*, the sphinse headed lute called *kong-hou*, the guitar *pi-pa* which has five cords, the cymbals and the conch."

Like the Indians the chinese also held the belief that the planets had a great influence on the fate or destiny of men. Thus Indian astrology and astronomy were the subjects of popular interest in China. In the 7th century there were three Indian astronomical schools at Chang-ngan. They were known as Gautama, Kasyapa and Kumara. From time to time they prepared calenders for use at the royal court. A member of Gautama school named Si-ta (Siddhartha) presented a new calendar in 718 to the Emperor. This calendar called kin-chi-li or in Sanskrit *Navagraha-siddhanta* a translation of an Indian calender is still preserved in a collection of the Tang period. It contained a calculation of the moon's course and the eclipses. The annals of the Su dynasty contain mention of the Chinese translation of a number of Indian mathematical and astronomical works which unfortunately are long lost.

Medicine or the *cikitsa vidya* was one of the five sciences *Panca-mahavidya* taught in the Buddhist convents and monasteries. With the popularisation of Buddhism in China the Indian medical system attracted the attention of the Chinese monks and several authoritative medical treatises and texts were studied and translated from pretty early times and instruction in the same imparted to monks in the monasteries. Even as late as the eleventh century an Indian medical treatise known as *Ravanakumara-tantra* dealing with the method of treating children's diseases by spell as well as by fumigation was translated into Chinese. Another small text believed to be the famous Ayurvedic compendium *Kasyapa-samhita* dealing with the diseases of the pregnant women and their treatment was translated in the same period.

POLITICAL MISSIONS

Indian monks and nobles also travelled to China as members of different political missions and embassies that were sent by the Indian kings to the Chinese emperors. In 719 the king of Balor Subhasri sent an ambassodar to the Chinese Emperor to express his gratitude for the award of the title "king of Pu-lu (Balor)" conferred on him by the Emperor. In 745 again the king of Balor sent a Buddhist teacher named Kia-lo-mi-to (Kalamitra) to pay respects to the

Emperor. The kings of Kapi-sa and Gandhara sent diplomatic missions to China in 750 and 758 respectively. The king of Kanauj named Yasovarman and king of Kashmir named Lalitaditya Muktapada respectively, sent diplomatic missions to China in 736 and c.745 soliciting military aid against the Tibetans. A Chola embassy visited the Imperial court in China in A.D. 1015. The Chola king Rajendra-I is said to have sent as presents, among other things, 21,000 ounces of pearls, 60 elephants tusks and 60 catties of frankincense. In A.D. 1033 and 1077 the Chola king sent two more embassies to China.

TRADE

There was a considerable development of sea borne trade between India and China during our period which marked the end of the Tang and the beginning of the Song period. An account written about A.D. 749 refers to numerous merchant men belonging to Polo-men *i.e.* Brahmanas of India and other countries on the river of Canton. It is evident that Indian merchants sailed in large numbers to this Chinese port and built temples for worship. The close commercial relations with China during this period is also ascertained by the discovery of the Tang dynasty coins in South India.

CENTRAL ASIA

The overland routes to China described above, passed through Central Asia, the region including that part of Asia which extends from the Kazahh steppes to Afghanistan and from the Caspian sea to the western boundaries of China. From early times the Indians settled in large numbers in the region introducing the customs, religion, culture and languages of their land. Indian missionaries passed through Central Asia on their way to China and spent sometime in the monasteries here which grew in large numbers from time to time. Detailed accounts of these monasteries and of the great centres of Indian culture in the region, have been given by the Chinese pilgrims, Fa-hien and Hiuen Tsiang. Many times in its history the region especially its eastern part, remained subject to Chinese political control and was, as such, amenable to Chinese cultural influences as well. As such, it is not without reason that the region has been called Ser-India.

Geographical contiguity was perhaps the reason that Sirkiang now called Sinkiang Uigur Autonomous Republic of China was selected from early times by the Buddhist missionaries of Kashmir a fit region for their missionary activities for disseminating and preaching the gospel of the Buddha. It has been said that the number of Buddhist missionaries to Central Asia far exceeded those from other parts of the country. Kashmir was directly connected with Sinkiang through Leh via the Kora Korrum passes. However, the Buddhist missionary work started with such zeal and enthusiasm by the Buddhist savants like Vairocana, Sanghabhuti, Punyatrata, Dharma Yasas, Buddhayasasa, Vimalaksha etc. witnessed as, said above, a sharp decline during the period under review, as the centre of missionary activity shifted from Central Asia to Tibet during this period. However, the trade activities of the Kashmiri merchants to

Central Asia continued unabated. They carried with them saffron, kuth (aromatic costus) and finished shawl goods and exchanged them for silk, carpets, drugs, silver, gold etc. The finest shawl wool called *pashm*, came from Changthong and Turfan, and the shawl industry remained an important source of income for the people of the state for centuries together. At one time the annual yield from the shawl revenue to the State was thirty five lakhs of rupees. With the closure of this ancient commercial route by the Chinese the centuries old *pashm* shawl industry in Kashmir has received a severe set back.

TIBET

The plateau of Tibet now called the Tibetan Autonomous region of China and appropriately called the roof of the world lies between the Kun-lun mountains (north) and the Himalayas (south). Two great trade routes, the gaylum and the Chaglum, the former from Nepal and the latter from Kashmir connected Tibet with the Indian sub-continent. The road from Nepal was *via* Kuti (Neelum) pass to Shigatse and thence to Lhasa. Leh in Kashmir was the starting point of the trade route to Tibet. It passed through Rudok at which place the Tibetan outpost is now maintained. Before the Chinese annexation of Tibet there were 25 staging places called Tarjum with accommodation sometimes houses but more generally tents for about 200 travellers. The stage houses were under the charge of an official who was bound to provide Yaks and other beasts of burden for carrying goods, mail etc. The two trade routes terminated at Tachienlu the great tea mart on the extreme boundary of Tibet.

During the period of our survey Tibet was at the pinnacle of its glory and power, and the period also witnessed the supremacy of Buddhism in Tibet. The king Khri-sron-lde-bt-san who ruled from A.D. 755 to 797, was a great patron of Buddhism. At his invitation Santarakshita, the High Priest of the University of Nalanda visited Tibet and was appointed the High Priest of Tibet. Santarakshita is regarded as one who introduced Vinaya or Buddhist code of conduct in Tibet. He was handicapped by his ignorance of the local knowledge but was helped by a Kashmiri Buddhist scholar Ananta who had preceded him and acted as his interpreter, Ananta had already mastered Tibetan and started translating Sanskrit Buddhist texts into Tibetan. Santarakshita conducted the ordination of several Tibetan monks and was responsible for the foundation of Bsam-yas monastery which he consecrated personally in 787 A.D.

Among the host of Buddhist monks of Kashmir who visited and worked in Tibet during the reign of Khri-sron-lde-btsan (755 to 797) the most celebrated was Sarvajnamitra, one of the rare Buddhist teachers mentioned by Kalhana "who set himself up as another Jina at Kayyavihara founded by Lalitaditya". Sarvajnamitra was a man of generous disposition and is said to have sold his own body to a rich merchant and gave the proceeds to a Brahmana in distress. The merchant who bought him wanted to sacrifice him to propitiate his goddess but just when the sacrificial fire was lit a thunderstorm extinguished it. The merchant struck with awe set him free and Sarvajnamitra repaired to Lhasa where he worked close to other Kashmiris. Sarvajnamitra was a worshipper of the goddess Tara and is the author of a number

of texts in praise of the goddess. Another important Buddhist scholar of Kashmir to visit and work in Tibet was Ratnavajra. Born in the second quarter of the 10th century, Ratnavajra was according to Taranatha, the son of a Brahmana named Haribhadra, a Buddhist convert. He studied in Kashmir upto the age of thirty and then went to Vikramasila for further studies. Ratnavajra went to Tho-liu where he assisted in translation of several works and corroborated with the great Tibetan translator, Rin-chan-zan-po. He further visited central Tibet where he had a chance to supervise the rebuilding of the circular terrace of Bsam-yas which was burnt in 986 A.D.

Kashmir produced a great nun named Lakshmi who belonged to the eleventh century. She is said to have been personally blessed by Arya Avalokitesvara. In Tibet she breached the ritual of propitiating Arya Avalokitesvara by performing the rite of fasting. At least five voluminous texts consecrated to Avalokitesvara are as per their colophon, attributed to Bhikshuni Lakshmi.

Other travellers from Kashmir to Tibet included Janardna, Subhutsrisanti, Somanatha and Sakya Sribhadra. Sakya-sribhadra was last of the Kashmir scholars to visit Tibet. Born in 1127 he went to Vikramasila for his studies. He became a great scholar of his time, and received the honour of becoming the teacher of the king of Magadha. He was appointed to the highest post of the Vikramasila-mahavihara. It was after the raid of Mohammad ibn Bakhtiyar (about 1197 A.D.), who destroyed the two great universities of Nalanda and Vikramasila that Sakyasribhadra went to Jagaddala (Bengal) and stayed there for three years. But on the fall of that State also Sakyasri went to Nepal. In Nepal he met a Tibetan scholar named Khru-phu who later wrote a biography of Sakyasri. At the request of Khru-phu Sakasri went to Tibet in 1200 A.D. According to Rahul Sanskritayana and the Blue Annals, he lived in Tibet for ten years. He worked intensively with Tibetan scholars and travelled about extensively visiting different monasteries in the regions. In one of these monasteries he even functioned as Superior. In Tibet he was popularly known as Kha-che-pan-chen (the great Pandit of Kashmir).

With Sakyasribhadra, came the end of a glorious period of the activities of Kashmiri Pandits in the Land of Snow. The Kashmiri scholars did not work on religious texts alone but also translated a number of secular works in Tibetan, as well, Chief among them are, a political treatise *Kaka-caritra*, a text on medicine titled *Vaidyaka Sidhisara*, written by Ravigupta of Kashmir, and *Nyaya bindutika*, a work on logic.

Besides the religious preachers, Kashmiri merchants in large numbers went to Tibet for trade. They were till recently known as Tibet baquals. The finest quality of shawl wool called *kel phumb* for the shawl industry in Kashmir came from Tibet. It was obtained from a goat

called *kel* a variety of caprahircus inhabiting the elevated regions of Tibet. Tibet was also a favourite haunt for drugs like Kahruba, Mumiran and Chob Chini besides gold and silver. The centuries old trade with Tibet was so lucrative that a saying has come down in Kashmiri: *yas gav las su zanh na av*.

Avai tas na zanh wau

(He who went to Lhasa never returned,
If he did come back, he was a rich man for ever).

We have given above a brief account of some Buddhist teachers of Kashmir who visited and worked in Tibet. From other parts of the country also mostly from Bengal a large number of Buddhist preachers went to Tibet notable among them were Dharmakirti (Bengal), Vimalamitra, Buddhaguhya, Santigarbha etc.

However, of all the great Indian religious teachers, to Tibet two are held in special veneration. They are guru Padmasambhava and Dipankara Atisa. They were subsequently deified and occupy a prominent position in the Buddhist pantheon of the Tibet and Ladakh. There is hardly a Buddhist monastery in Tibet, Ladakh and the entire Himalayan belt which does not contain a statue of Padmasambhava and Atisa. They are too well known for detailed description. Padmasambhava who hailed from Udyana (Swat) and lived and worked for sometimes in Kashmir, went to Tibet in the 8th century and introduced Tantrik Buddhism in Tibet of which he was a great master and authority.

Dipankara Atisa was born in Bengal in A.D. 980. After attaining proficiency in both Buddhist and Brahmanical philosophy and scriptures, he rose to the high position of becoming the High Priest of Vikramasila. He was invited to Tibet to introduce reforms in Buddhism debased by the admixture of Tantrik and Bon mysticism. Atisa spent thirteen years of his life in Tibet preaching the pure doctrines of Buddhism and writing sacred texts number of which is said to be about two hundred. He is credited with freeing the debased Buddhism in Tibet from Tantrik elements. He died in A.D. 1053 and as said above is held in deep veneration in Tibet and elsewhere.

JAPAN

After the introduction of Buddhism in Japan Indian monks lost no opportunity to visit the country. The Japanese chronicles contain account of an Indian Bhikshu named Bodhisena. A Brahmana of south India, Bodhisena, left for China by sea and met on the way a priest of Champa named Buttetsu. They reached China together in 733 A.D.

Bodhisena had gone to China to see Manjusri who he was told lived there. However, Manjusri had left for Japan and Bodhisena, on the invitation of the Japanese envoy at the court

of China, accompanied the latter and reached in 736. On their arrival at the port of Naniwa (Osaka) they were received with great honour by the Chief priest and high dignitaries of the foreign office. Bodhisena conversed with the local priests both in Japanese and Sanskrit. He performed the consecration ceremony in 749, of a colossal image of Buddha Vairocana in 750 Bodhisena was appointed the head of the Buddhist order in Japan and came to be popularly known as Baraman sojo (Brahmana Bishop). He taught Sanskrit and Mahayana doctrine in three different monasteries and died in 760 at the age of 57. The companion of Bodhisena, Bhuttetsu was besides being a scholar, a great master of music and dance. He stayed for long in the reputed Nara University of Japan and imparted instructions in Indian music and dance. He also taught Sanskrit and wrote a Sanskrit Primer for the purpose.

BAGHDAD

Baghdad was during the period under review a nerve centre of the Islamic world. The direct intercourse between India and Baghdad received great impetus during the reigns of Al-Mansur (A.D. 754-75) and Harun Al-Rashid (A.D. 786-809). Several Indian embassies visited the Muslim court of Baghdad from time to time. These embassies were often accompanied by the veteran Indian scholars who were responsible for introducing the study of Indian Mathematics and Astronomy to the Arab world. According to Alberuni, it is one of the conditions of a Kalpa that in it the planets must unite in 0 degree of Aries i.e. in the point of vernal equinox. Thus each planet makes within a kalpa a certain number of complete revolutions or cycles. These star cycles known to the Arabs through the canon of Alfazari and Yaqub Ibu Tariq, were derived from a Hindu who came to Baghdad as a member of the Political mission which Sindh sent to Caliph Al-Mansur in A.H. 154 or 771 A.D. The same scholar again remarks, "The only Hindu traditions we have regarding the distances of the stars are those mentioned by Yaqub Ibu Tariq in his book, the "composition of spheres" and he had drawn his information from the well known Hindu scholar who in A.H. 161 (778 A.D.) accompanied an embassy to Baghdad." The presence of Indian embassies in Babylonia in A.H. 154 (A.D. 771), and A.H. 156 (A.D. 773), is referred to by Alberuni and Mohammad Ibu Aladami respectively.

The contacts between India and Baghdad were further promoted by the paramaks or the Chief priests of the Buddhist vihara of Balkh called Navasamgharama who after their conversion were known as Baramaks and occupied very high positions in the administration during the caliphates of Al-mansur and Haruna Al-Rashid. Being proficient in the five great sciences or panca-maha-vidyas then taught in the Buddhist convents they encouraged the study of Indian sciences at Baghdad. It was at their instance that several Indian scholars visited Baghdad and translated into Arabic Sanskrit Books on medicine, pharmacology, toxicology, philosophy, astronomy, astrology, algebra, arithmetic etc.

These included the fables of Kalila and Dimna based on the *Pancatantra*, *Brahma-sphuta*, *siddhanta* and the *khandakha-dyaka* of Brahmagupta, the famous works of Caraka and Susruta and the Nidana and the Ashtanga of Vagbhata. The Susruta was translated by an Indian whose name is written in Arabic as Mankha. He cured Harun Al-Rashid of a severe illness and was appointed by the caliph the head of the Royal Hospital.

The names of a number of Indian scholars who visited Baghdad are preserved in Arabic works but it is unfortunately not possible to reproduce the original Indian forms from the Arabic transliteration. The reproductions by Schau of some of them as 'A tri', the author of three books on 'drinkables', Vedavyasa the author of a book on Philosophy and Vyaghra the author of 'signs of swords' are considered not beyond doubt by the scholars.

Baghdad was connected directly with Sindh by an overland main route passing through Firbuz, Kandhar, Kabul, Balk, Marv, Nishapur, Daughan, Ray, Hamdan and Kirmanshah.

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INDIA THROUGH THE EYES OF FOREIGN TRAVELLERS (c.A.D. 1200 - 1800)

W.H.SIDDIQI

INDIA is one of the earliest cradles of human civilisation and has had established epoch-making institutions which have survived through millennia. It has produced vast literature dealing with philosophy and religion including ethics, ritual and ceremonial, cosmology, geography, astronomy, astrology and the allied sciences, political and economic doctrines and practices; and in a way with almost all branches of secular life and rich cultural heritage¹. The fame of its unprecedented growth of civilisation and all-embracing culture have been attracting the attention of the people in Asia as well as in Europe.

Its relation with other civilisations go back to the Protohistoric times. During the medieval period, the Arab traders developed brisk commercial contact and carried Indian goods to the European markets through Egypt and Syria. And during this extensive and intensive phase of economic inter action Arab became the leading partner in trade and commerce. Large number of Arabs settled on Western and Southern coasts of India which flourished during the centuries after the rise of Islam. The Indian rulers appointed Muslim judges, known as *hunarman* to decide their cases and provided all facilities to them to organise their community life². Commercial contact led to cultural relations and while large number of Arab navigational and other terms were adopted by the Indians, Indian customs, institutions and practices found their way to Arabia. Philologists have traced three Sanskrit words—*mishk* (musk), *zanjbil* (ginger), and *kafur* (camphor) in the Quran³. An Indian raja is reported to have sent Indian pickle to the Prophet.

The prophet's remark that he received sweet fragrance from India has been quoted by many later writers. Azad Bilgrami has dealt, in his *Subhat-ul-Marjan*, with many traditions of the Prophet in which reference is made to India. According to the Ibn Khallikan, Imam Hussain's son, Imam Zainul-Abidin, was born of an Indian mother. Imam Bukhari informs us that once when Hazrat 'Aisha (wife of the Prophet) fell ill, her nephews called an Indian physician for her treatment⁴.

The earlier account of foreigners especially Greeko-Romans suffer from wants of authentic information about India, as most of them did not come to India and evidently therefore, whatever they recorded was based on hear-say. Moreover, the main purpose of the Chinese missionaries being visits to Buddhist holy places and study of Buddhism, they paid less attention to the other aspects of Indian life.

Thus from the 8th century onwards till about the fifteenth century, when the Portuguese records appear, the Arab's accounts supply extremely valuable information about the socio-economic life in general and the cultural aspect in particular.

The unprecedented literary activity under the Abbasid caliphs and the establishment of Baitul-Hikma produced vast literature on religious and secular sciences. Large number of Greek works and Indian classics on science and other subjects were translated into Arabic. Through these translations and cultural contacts between Baghdad and India, the Arabs became familiar with the life and thought of the Indian people. Yahya Barmaki, the Abbasid Wazir, is reported to have sent a delegation of scholars to India to gather information about Indian religions⁵.

Almost all the Arab writers mention that they frequently visited India and Ceylon impelled by the devotional fervour to see the traditional footprint of Adam.

Meanwhile the establishment of a vast Muslim empire comprising the civilised world with a network of roads, canals, bridges and caravanserais and highly developed department of post and Intelligence (*Diwan-al-Barid*) eased the barriers of time and distance and made free movement and mingling of various nations much easier and safer. Due to the changed circumstances navigators and merchants who visited India during this period (9th to 15th century) could provide more accurate and comprehensive information about the country. Owing to the thorough knowledge and understanding of the Indian people the Arabs developed sympathetic attitude toward Indian thoughts and sciences, and left sizeable number of travelogues and books written on various subjects such as history, geography, religion, science and literature, containing valuable material on medieval India.

Some of the Arab writers have paid much attention to record the important aspects of Indian life. Jahiz paid glowing tributes to the Indians in these words "The inhabitants of India are highly meritorious in astrology and medicine. They have a peculiar script and have a supreme insight. They have in their possession some strange secrets of the art of Aesculapius. They have medicines for some very fatal diseases. In making busts and statues, in making pictures out of colours, and in architecture they are superb. They are the inventors of chess which is a game of mental gymnastics. They make fine swords and know how to wield them. They know incantations to annihilate the effect of poisoning and to cure aches. Their music is also enchanting. One of their musical instrument is known as Kanka⁶ (?) which is played on by striking a chord strung in a gourd. It sounds like the guitar and the conchshell. There is every variety of dance and they have got different kinds of scripts. There is an uncommon fund of poetical wealth and oratorical affluence in their possession. They have plenty of courage and commonsense and many qualities which are wanting even in the Chinese. Cleanliness is a noted feature. They have good looks, tall stature and a taste for perfumes. It is from their land that the peerless ambergris comes for the use of kings. Streams of high thinking flowed

down from India to Arabia. They are the inventors of astronomical calculations. Their women are expert singers and their men are expert cooks. Their natural bias is towards figuring, monetary transactions and things like these. They make very honest and faithful servants".⁷ Another Arab writer has appreciated the notable characteristics of Indian people in the following words: "The Indians are naturally inclined to justice and never depart from it in their actions. Their good faith, honesty and fidelity to their engagements are well-known and they are so famous for these qualities that people flock to their country from every side; hence the country is flourishing and their condition prosperous." Among other characteristic marks of their love of truth and horror of falsehood, the following is related: "when a man has a right to demand anything of another, and he happens to meet him he has only to draw a circular line upon the ground and to make his debtor enter it, which the latter never fails to do, and the debtor cannot leave this circle without satisfying his creditor, or obtaining the remission of the debt"⁸.

Ibn Hauqai, an Arab geographer of the Second half of the tenth century, travelled throughout the Muslim and some European countries including Spain, Sicily, Southern edge of Sahara, Armenia and India and completed his work entitled *Kitab-ul-Masalik Wal Mamalik*, in 989 A.D. He has given comprehensive details about the major cities of India and recorded the distances between them. He has also given the map of Sind⁹.

Among the outstanding scholars who visited India and studied its political and religious institutions through Sanskrit language was Abu Raihan Al-Biruni who was well versed in astronomy, mathematics, geography, religion and philosophy. His book entitled *Kitab-ul-Hind* is the most authentic work on Indian life of the eleventh century¹⁰.

Muhammad bin Abdur Rahim al-Qulainashi-al-Ghamati says in his book *Tuhfat-ul-Albab*, "the huge country, great justice, considerable wealth, good administration, constant convenience of life, and security on account of which there is no fear in the country of India and China. The Indians are the most learned people in the branches of Philosophy, medicine, arithmetic and (skilled) in all the wonderful crafts which is impossible to imitate. In their mountains and islands there grow the trees of aloes-wood and camphor and all sorts of aromatic plants e.g. clove tree, nutmeg, spikenard (Sumbul), dar-chini, cinnamon (qirfa) salikha, cardamon (qaqullah), cubed, mace and many kinds of drugs of vegetable origin (aqaqir). And they have musk deer and civet cat. Different kinds of rubies are exported from their country, mostly from the island of Ceylong"¹².

Shihabuddin-al-Umari of Damascus (who traced his descent from the second caliph Umar) was a profound scholar of Arabic, astronomy, mathematics, history and geography. His encyclopaedic work contained in twenty two volumes, known as *Masalik-ul-Absar-fi-Masalika-il-Amsar*¹³ is a careful and balanced account of the geographical and historical conditions of various countries including a very interesting and significant account of India of the early

fourteenth century. He himself did not come to India but collected most authentic data from the travellers who had visited India and were eye witnesses but whose works were not very well-known. One of these was Shaikh Mubarak bin Muhammad Khambayati who belonged to a noble family and was closely associated with Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq.

Umari's work contains extremely valuable account of the social, political, religious and economic condition of India during the reign of Muhammad Bin Tughluq (1325-1351 A.D.). It is interesting to note that the reign of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq formed a landmark in Indo-Arab relations because he established wide contacts with the West Asian countries.

Abmari gives "More recorded accurate information about India its produce, flora, fauna rivers and climate, prices and currency, means of communication and transportation, grades of nobles and officers of the state their salaries and emoluments, the royal *karkhanas* and other establishments, houses, dresses of the people and graphic description of Delhi and Daulatabad (ancient Deogir)"¹⁴.

"Delhi consists of many cities which are grouped together and each of them has a special name. Delhi being one of them. All the cities to which the name Delhi is applied now a days are twenty one in number. It is measured in miles in length and breadth. The circumference of the populated area is forty miles. The houses of Delhi are built in stone and bricks, the roofs are of wood and the floors are paved with white stones resembling marble. They do not build the houses more than two stories high and often confine themselves to only one. Nobody paves his house with marble except the Sultan.

There are one thousand Madrasas out of which only one belongs to the Shafites and the rest are for the Hanfites. There are about seventy *Bimaristan* (hospitals) which are called *Darush-shifa*. In Delhi and its surroundings there are about two thousand sylum (*ribat*) and hospices (*Khanqahs*)¹⁵. There are, famous places of pilgrimage and big Bazars numerous baths. The inhabitants drink rain water which is collected in large reservoirs, diameter of each being about the distance of an arrow shot or more.

Delhi has gardens on its three sides—east, south and north in straight lines; every line is twelve miles. As regards the western side it is despite of gardens on accounts of the proximity of numerous ravines, and beyond that there are cities and numerous districts. The Sultan does not permit beggars in Delhi to beg from the people"¹⁶.

After the decline of Arab trade and commerce with India, the Europeans started their exploration to find a safe sea route and to have a direct contact with India. The first among the medieval travellers to India was Rabbi Benjamin of Tudella who set out from Spain in 1160 A.D. and travelling by land to Constantinople, proceeded to Chinese Tartary. Therefore,

he took his route towards the South and after visiting various provinces of farther India returned home via Egypt¹⁷. The next famous visitor to the east was the Venetian named Marco Polo in 1271, accompanied by his father and uncle. They reached the court of Kublai Khan at Shangtu, and in course of time visited the southern coast of India and the adjoining countries.

These Venitains visited India for promoting their trade in this region. But in turn Marcopolo's accounts of his travels became one of the most favourite books in the middle ages. It contributed a lot to the European geographical researches¹⁸.

About Kashmir Marcopolo mentions, among other things, the beauty of its women, the notoriety of its men as great magicians, the idolatry of its inhabitants and its excellent climate. He has also recorded the method of idol worship by the people of Bengal, their brisk trade in cotton, their simple fare consisting of rice, milk and meat the abundance of spices, sugar and ginger in the region. He also refers to its evil notoriety for traffic in eunuchs and slaves, both male and female. Marco also visited the kingdom of mutfile (tilangana) which was then ruled by the Kaketya dynasty at Warangal. He found a queen ruling that kingdom who was a lover of justice, equality and peace. In her kingdom diamond was found in plenty in alluvial beds of rivers, but the mountain valleys contained the largest amount.

He further states that the people of Coulam (Tamilnadu) married their sister and near relations. In Gujrat there was abundance of cotton and trees and plants which grow very tall and lasted for twenty years. In Cambay (Khambat) there was much indigo, bukram, and cotton and Somnath was a place of idolators and merchants.¹⁹

Another Venetian Marino Snuto visited India five years later for promoting commerce. His accounts indicate that the European foreign trade was mostly in the hands of Italians and Arabs controlled the Asian trade. This was the period when the Portuguese made their presence felt in the Indian sea. But it took them more than a century to establish themselves on the Indian soil.

In 1417, Nicolo Conti, a noble Venetian travelled in the east for twenty five years recording the route of his journeys which is quite interesting. He started from Damascus, passed on to Baghdad and taking a ship at Bussrah arrived at Cambay on the western coast of India. There he observed "those precious stones, sardonyxes". Proceeding southward along the coast he arrived, after twenty days, at two cities which grew ginger in abundance. Then he reached Vijayanagar (Bizenegalia) wherefrom he went to Maylapur, a suburb of Madras, where lay the body of St. Thomas. Then he returned via Ceylon.²⁰

Among one of the last oriental travellers to India, who left a valuable account of his stay and visits, was Abdur Razzaq, an ambassador from Shahrukh, son of Timur of Central Asia.

His accounts of the Deccan kingdoms in general and the capital of Vijayanagar in particular are extremely valuable for reconstructing the glorious past of the medieval Deccan. His description of Vijayanagar is remarkable for its vivid details:

"The city of Bidjanagar (Vijayanagar) is such that the pupil of the eye has never seen place like it, and the ear of intelligence has never been informed that there existed anything to equal it in the world. It is built in such a manner that seven citadels and the same number of walls enclose each other. Around the first citadel are stones of the height of a man, which is sunk in the ground while the other rises above it. These are fixed one beside the other, in such a manner that no horse or foot soldier could bodily or with ease approach the citadel. If any one would wish to find what point of resemblance this fortress and rampart present with that which exists in the city of Herat, let him picture to himself that the first citadel corresponds with that which extends from the mountain of Mokhatar and Direh dou buraderim (the valley of the two brothers) as far as the banks of the river and the bridge of Malan, situated east of the town of Chinan, and west of the village of Saiban.

Each class of men belonging to each profession has shops contiguous the one to the other; the jewellers sell publicly in the *bazar* pearls, rubies, emeralds and diamonds. In this agreeable locality, as well as in the king's palace, one sees numerous running streams and canals formed of chiselled stone, polished and smooth. On the left of the Sultan's portico rises the *divan-khaneh* (the council-house), which is extremely large and looks like a palace. In front of it is a hall, the height of which is a over the stature of a man, its length thirty ghez, and its breadth teen. In it is placed the *defter-khaneh* (the archives) and here sit the scribes. The writing of this people is of two kinds: in one they write their letter with a *kalam* of iron upon a leaf of Indian nut (the coconut tree), which is two *ghez* in length and two *ginhrtd* in breadth. These characters have no colour, and the writing lasts but a short time. In the second kind of writing they blacken a white surface; they then take a soft stone, which they cut like a *kalam* and which they use to form the letters; this stone leaves on the black surface a white colour, which lasts a very long time and this kind of writing is held in high estimation."²¹

Athanasiaus Niktin, a Russian traveller was one of the last travellers of the fifteenth century who visited India in 1468 A.D. About Cambay he mentions that it was "a port of the whole of India and manufacturing place for all sorts of goods namely demask, satin and blankets". Here was produced the blue stone colour Indigo. He mentions about Calicut for producing pepper colour plants, muscat, cloves, cinnamon, aromatic roots, *adrach*(ginger) and spices of every description which were sold very cheap. He then proceeded inland and visited Bidar, Gulbarga, Vijaynagar etc. In Bidar he observed the trade in horses, silks, and Ethiopian slaves. He was so dazzled by the magnificance of the place that he considered it to be the chief city of India. He mentions that Vijaynagar was surrounded by three forts and ruled over by a Hindu king who had a large army and a palace built on a hill."²²

Large number of European travellers continued to visit India mainly for the sake of commerce. But the Portugues had religious and territorial ambitions and ultimately succeeded in establishing themselves at Goa, which became a seat of missionary campaigns. Some of them have left very valuable information about India during the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries.

Besides Portuguese, English and French travellers frequently visited during this period and their records contain mines of informtion and is not possible even to make a passing reference in this paper.²³

Father Thomas Stephens (1575-1619) was one of the first Englishman known to have settled in India, the first Anglo-Indian poet and the first European to have taken a scholarly interest in any of the vernacular of India. His letters to his father aroused much interest in Indian trade. His outstanding contribution was his translation of Puranas in Marathi language which he wrote in Roman characters.²⁴

Ralph Fitch, who visited India during the last quarter of the sixteenth century, has left valuable account of India which is by far the most important. He has described in some details the social customs and religious practices of India of the sixteenth century. His description of the city of Banaras and its *ghats* is probably the liveliest and most vivid piece of description in his entire work.²⁵

The picture that emerges from Ralph Fitch's narrative is of a highly prosperous India. He was scarcely interested in the political conditions. However, the wealth of the country impressed him the most. About the city of Bijapur, he records "Here they have good stone, gold and silver; their houses are of stone very fair and high."²⁶ Ludovico di Varthema also described the city in the following words:

"The city is extremely beautiful and very fertile. The city is walled after the manner of the Christians and the houses are very beautiful there is a mountain in his kingdom where they dig out diamonds, which mountain is a league distant from the city, and is surrounded by a wall, and is kept by a great guard"²⁷.

Fitch throws a flood of light on the social and economic conditions of some other cities of India as well. From Golconda, he went to Masuliputam which he called "a porte or heaven which steandith eight days journey from hence towards the Gulfe of Bengala, whither come many ships out of India. Degu (in Burma) and Sumatra, very richly laden with pepper, spices and other commodities"²⁸.

Fitch found it to be a great and populous city, built of stone having fair and wide streets. What he calls, a very great city evokes but a brief description, comprising about half a dozen lines, but it is admitted by a faithful account, Francisco Pelsaert described Agra as exceedingly large, but decayed open and unwallled. Petr Mundy wrote, from personal knowledge, that Agra "was very populous by reasons of the Great Mongolls keeping his court here"²⁹.

Sufficiently large numbers of European travellers visited India in the 17th century. They have left voluminous details of their observations and experiences in the country. They have provided graphic descriptions of the cities, religious and political institutions, conditions of the roads, law and order and commercial commodities available in different parts of the country. Such European literature grew more in volume after the establishment of East India company in 1600, whose records are valuable from several points of view.

The visits of Acquaviva and Fr. Monserrate in Sept. 1580 to the court of Emperor Akbar at Fatehpur Sikri, are historically very important. He has recorded his physical features and temperament etc. in details. Regarding Diwan-Khans-i-Am Fr. Monserrate records that "here Akbar showed himself to the people every morning about three hours after sunrise and set to dispense justice sternly and impartially but without harshness or illwill. An executioner stood by throughout the hearings, with whips, bow-strings filled with sharp copper spikes and other instruments to torture," Monserrate says that these were not actually used, but were meant to instil terror. Those found guilty of a capital crime were sentenced to death, whether by hanging impairment or tremping by elephants, but were taken elsewhere to suffer, as Monserrate points out.³⁰

Among other important travellers of the seventeenth century mention must be made of Jean Bapstite Tavernier and Francois Bernier, who have written volumes giving account of Mughal India. These narratives are extremely useful for the study of Mughal empire in detail. But certain remarks about the private life of the emperor and the princes are based on street gossips. Tavernier gives valuable account of the construction of Taj Mahal which was completed, according to him, in twenty two years. He claims to have seen both the commencement and completion of this 'unique' monument which he could not see from within as it was then guarded by women³¹. Berniers account of war of succession and capital city, Shahjahanabad (Delhi), its rich markets, houses of the nobility, and the emperors daily routines in the citadel (Qala-i-Mubarak) are very useful. His hypothesis that Indian feudalism had an inherant weakness because the nobility was not heridatory³² is strange.

Among the large number of European travellers of eighteenth century we may mention the name of James Forbes who joined the service of East India Company at Bombay in 1766 at a young age of seventeen. He has one of the fortune-seekers from England at a time when the British had taken possession of several territories in different parts of India. This ambitious

youngman had a literary taste besides uncommon interest in the life and culture of Indian people. He recorded his observations in details about the topography, monuments, flora and fauna of the villages, towns and cities that he visited.

Goa was the first place where he landed and observed "It was the most magnificent of all the European settlements in India and the Churches, monasteries and other public structures has fossilized impression of the former splendour of the capital of Portuguese."

He also records that child marriage and the widow burning herself with the body of the deceased husband was practised in Maharashtra. Forbes also gives interesting account of the private life of the people.

He noticed that wealthy Hindus, Muslims and Parsees frequently entertained their friends at their garden houses, in the company of dancing girls and musician. These performers were hired for festivals and ceremonies by people all sects and professions in India. He has also mentioned the continued tradition of dancing girls (devdasis) dedicated to the Hindu shrines.

His account of the natural wealth, particularly regarding precious minerals, is very valuable. He has given interesting details as to how carmillian, agates and other beautiful variety of semi-precious stones were obtained from the mines. According to him the best agate and carnelian were found about 30 feet below the earth's surface at Cambay. He has also mentioned about the industry of processing and finishing semi-precious stones and their export to other places in India and abroad. His description of the jungles and the wild life of the early 19th century is of considerable historical interest. He has recorded almost all the species of animals, birds, reptiles and insects found in the region.

Forbes observed a unique unity in the diversity of Indian culture throughout the country. He was impressed by the richness of Indian traditions and culture, but was also pained to note certain social evils then prevailing in the society³³.

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12. Zaki, *op. cit.* p. 6.
13. *Ibid* p. 20.
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The famous Moorish traveller Ibn Battutta (d. 1377) has left graphic description of different places in the sub-continent and details of Sultanate administration of Delhi. Regarding Delhi he mentions that it consists of four cities (i) Delhi itself; (2) Siri also called Darul-Khilafa (3) Tughluqabad called after its founder Sultan Tughluq (4) Jahan Panah, the residence of Sultan Muhammad Shah. He also mentions that the wall that surrounds Delhi has no equal. Agha Mahdi Husain, *The Rehlia* (Baroda, 1953) vii, xviii, liii. Also see *Futuh-at-in-Firuz Shahi* (Aligarh, 1954), 1-17

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AL-BIRUNI'S PERCEPTION OF INDIAN SOCIETY & CULTURE

M.S. KHAN

ONE of the Many foreign travellers who visited India was Abdul-Rayhan Mohammad Ibn Ahmad al-Biruni¹ who had deep affection and profound respect for India. He was born in 362/973 in a territory of modern Khwarizm (*Khiva*) in Turkistan of Central Asia, now part of the USSR. It would not be necessary to give details of his biography which are generally known. Suffice it to state, that he lived mainly in Khwarizm, Jurjan, Ghazna, Kabul and different parts of India (see below).

Among others he was attached to the courts of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna and his son and successor, Sultan Masud (killed 1040 A.D.), to whom he dedicated his monumental work *al-Qanun al-Masudi*.

The regions of the Eastern Caliphate in which he lived and worked in early life, were ruled by the Samanids of Bakhara, the Ziyarids of Jurjan and the Mamunids of Khwarizm and other adjoining areas. The best kingdom was conquered in 1017 A.D. by Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna, who took away all the learned men including al-Biruni to his capital. Soon after, the Sultan led several expeditions into India and conquered a good part of its north-western territory.² This gave al-Biruni his first opportunity to visit India and study its society and culture, at first hand.

There is a difference of opinion about the date of his death. It is stated that he died in 442/1050 when he was seventy-five years old, but some other historians prefer 440/1048 as the year of his death. Similarly, differences exist also about the implication of his name al-Biruni. It has been suggested that he belonged to Birun, a town in Sindh.³

AL-BIRUNI'S TRAVELS IN INDIA

Al-Biruni visited India with the army of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna but it cannot be stated definitely as to how long he lived in this country. Different historians have stated that he stayed in India for two years⁴ or nine years;⁵ thirteen years,⁶ or forty years.⁷ Abul Kalam Azad has come to the conclusion not only on the basis of al-Biruni's statements in his book on India but also after a critical examination of his *al-Qanun al-Masudi* and the *Kitab as-Saydana* that he lived in India at frequent intervals for a period of nine or ten years after 410/1019, adding that he travelled extensively in Sind, Punjab and Kashmir.⁸ However, there are facts on record to suggest that he lived and travelled in India between A.D.1017, and 1030 for a period of about thirteen years.

Regarding the Indian places he visited, a more definite statement can be made. As he records that he himself observed the latitudes of Kandi, Dunpur, Lamghan, Purshawar (Peshwar), Waihind, Jhelum, Nandana fortress, Sialkote, Mandakkakor and Multan, it is certain that he visited and lived in them for some time.⁹ It is correct to state that he also visited Lahore, Rajagiri, parts of Sindh and the borders of Kashmir.¹⁰ Mahmud's conquest of these regions facilitated his travels and residence in them. But he did not visit any part of southern India and Shankaracharya was not known to him, as he does not mention him in any of his works. Perhaps he did not accompany Sultan Mahmud during his expedition to Somnath in Kathiawar. The detailed account of the geo-physical conditions of India and his description of sixteen itineraries with their distances in *farsakhs* (measure of three miles) found in his book does not mean that he travelled extensively in all parts of this country.¹¹

HIS BOOK ON INDIA

According to latest research, one hundred and eighty-two¹² books, treatises and translations have been attributed to him of which at least twenty-seven deal with Indian subjects.¹³ But most of them are not extant now. Only forty-two of his books are available at present which reveal his width and depth of knowledge, his versatility, his scientific vision, erudition and scholarship. Of these, there are five books, translations and treatises which concern Indian Society and culture specially the *Kitab fi Tahqiq ma li 'l- Hind min Maqulatin Maqbulatin fi 'l-'Aql aw Mardhula*, (*Book Containing Researches on India Concerning (Hindu) Thought which are Acceptable to Reason as well as those to be Rejected*) It is generally called *Kitab al-Hind* or *Book on India*. The German Orientalist Edward C. Sachau published the Arabic text of this book in 1887 (London, pp.365), and its English translation in 1888 also from London. A revised critical edition of the text was published by the Dairat al-Maarif of Hyderabad in 1958 (pp.30+548),¹⁴ and a partial edition was published by Abdul-Halim Mahmud at Cairo in 1959. At least two Indian reprints of the English translations are known.¹⁵ Four abridgements of this book have been published in English based on the translation of Sachau.¹⁶ In addition to the English translation, it has also been translated into Hindi, Bengali, Malayali, Urdu, Persian and Russian.¹⁷

It is one of the most important books of al-Biruni which was compiled around 1030 A.D. after the death of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna. It discusses Hindu religion and philosophy, its social laws and customs, its different castes and creeds, its religious books and Sanskrit Grammar. There are many chapters on Indian astronomy, mathematics and astrology are not neglected. It is not an exaggeration but a statement of fact that no other book like the *Kitab al-Hind* of al-Biruni has been written in any other language not even in Sanskrit, which contains such a comprehensive discussion of Indian philosophy, religion and fundamental sciences based on original sources and at the same time presents a comparison with the sciences and philosophy of the Greeks and the Arabs.

HIS KNOWLEDGE OF SANSKRIT

Before al-Biruni's perception of Indian Society and Culture is discussed, it is desirable to answer the question of the extent of his knowledge of Sanskrit. He had realised that if one desires to write a book of encyclopaedic dimension on India concerning its society, culture and civilization, he must know Sanskrit. For this reason, he put in hard labour to learn it during his stay in India. There is a difference of opinion among the scholars as to how deep was his knowledge of Sanskrit. There are some who state that he knew Sanskrit well¹⁸ while others believe that he had only a superficial working knowledge of this language. There are 3000 Sanskrit words in his books on India recorded in Arabic transcription¹⁹ and there is no doubt that he knew it as much as was necessary for his study of Indian Sanskrit texts and for communication with Pandits and Shastris. Al-Biruni has himself admitted in several works that in translating Sanskrit works into Arabic, he took help from them. If his knowledge of Sanskrit was not sufficient, it would not have been possible for him to translate almost correctly such difficult scientific works dealing with astronomy,²⁰ mathematics²¹ and astrology²² which were composed in Sanskrit slokas in which the authors' ideas are not expressed clearly. He states that he translated the works of Euclid, Ptolemy and one of his own works on the astrolabe into Sanskrit, but none of them is extant now. He had also translated the *Samkhya* by Kapila and the *Book of Patanjali* in Arabic. It is most likely that the Sanskrit translation of the *Kalima-i Tayyiba*²³ (Muslim Holy Creed) that appears on the coins of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna was done by him.

INDIAN SOCIETY

At first, it is proposed to discuss briefly al-Biruni's perception of Indian society and religions. He devotes one chapter (IX) to the discussion of the caste system Varna or Colour-based Caste and on the classes below them and correctly informs his readers about the four castes in which the Brahmans occupy the topmost position. The other three castes mentioned by him are Kstriya, Vaisya and Sudra. He adds that from a genealogical point of view, the Hindus call them Jataka or births. This is compared with the four castes prevalent in ancient Persia where this division was according to their profession or the services they rendered to the society.²⁴

Below the above four major castes, there were eight other classes called Antyajas who render different kinds of services to the society each specializing in certain craft or profession.²⁵ They inter-marry and interdine among themselves.

While explaining the caste system's origin and religious and civil laws of the Hindus, al-Biruni explains that this was possible only when the throne and altar or politics and religion unite. In the beginning of the chapter on caste system, he makes the following remarks which prove the extent and depth of his sociological insight:

"If a new order of things in political or social life is created by a man naturally ambitious of ruling, who by his character and capacity really deserves to be a ruler, a man of firm convictions and unshaken determination, who even in times of reverses is supported by good luck, in so far as people then side with him in recognition of former merits of his, such an order is likely to become consolidated among those for whom it was created, and to continue as firm as the deeply rooted mountains. It will remain among them as a generally recognized rule in all generations through the course of time and the flight of ages. If, then, this new form of state or society rest in some degree on religion, these twins, state and religion, are in perfect harmony, and their union represents the highest development of human society, all that men can possibly desire".²⁶

Again when he discusses the sources of Indian religions and civil laws and explains the nature of Hindu religious laws and whether such laws can be abrogated or not, he observes:-

"As for the question of the abrogation of laws, it seems that this is not impossible with the Hindus, for they say that many things which are now forbidden were allowed before the coming of Vasudeva, *e.g.* the flesh of cows. Such changes are necessitated by the change of the nature of man, and by their being too feeble to bear the whole burden of their duties. To these changes also belong the changes of the matrimonial system and of the theory of descent".²⁷

About the number of wives to be taken by the different castes he records that a Brahman may take four, a Kshatriya three, a Vaisya two wives and a Sudra One.²⁸

Some Arab travellers have stated that adultery was permissible in India but this statement is strongly contradicted by al-Biruni.

About the caste of the child al-Biruni records :-

The child belongs to the caste of the mother, not to that of the father. Thus, *e.g.* if the wife of a Brahman is a Brahman, her child also is a Brahman; if she is a Sudra, her child is a Sudra. In our time, however, the Brahmans, although it is allowed to them, never marry any woman except one of their own caste.²⁹

Al-Biruni writes about the social manners and customs of the Hindus which he considered to be strange because they were different from his own and informs his readers on what is allowed and forbidden in eating and drinking, on matrimony, the menstrual courses, embryos, birth of children, period of confinement, on reward and punishment, on inheritance, on various kinds of fasting, on the determination of the fast days, on the festivals specially Diwali and others and festive days, on sacred pond, and sacred places of worship such as Varanasi,

Kurukshetra, Mathura and others, on days which are held in special veneration, on lucky and unlucky times and on such times as are particularly favourable for acquiring in them blessings in heaven and adds a discussion on charity and other virtuous actions which bring a special reward from God.³⁰

INDIAN RELIGIONS

A study of the *Kitab al-Hind* of al-Biruni reveals that he writes about Hinduism (Brahmanism) Visnuitic not Sivaitic but gives very little information about Buddhism and Buddha. Hindu religious beliefs, rituals and practices are discussed in several chapters. Their laws and religions are compared with those of the Greeks and others.

It is evident that he is quite impressed by Indian metaphysics and it is perhaps for this reason that he translated the *Samkhya* of Kapila and the Book of *Patanjali* into Arabic. The information he gives about Hinduism are derived mainly from the *Vedas*, the *Bhagvad-Gita*, *Puranas*, *Smrtis*, one of the two epics, three *Vedangas* and the above two books on Indian metaphysics.³¹ He records that according to the Hindu belief the *Veda* contains the words of God coming out from the mouth of the Brahman and adds that its basic teachings cannot be changed at any time.³² He is careful enough not to criticize and make adverse remarks against any of these sacred books of the Hindus.

HINDU METAPHYSICS

Al-Biruni states clearly that the Hindus believe in one God³³ and correctly states that they do not believe in Prophethood because they do not consider the Prophets necessary.

Due credit should be given to al-Biruni for explaining the subtle distinction between the concepts of *Isvara* (lit. Ruler of the Universe) and *Deva* (lit. shining Deity) which is worthy of veneration and worship but is not God. On this subject he refers to the eternal Asvattha (holy fig tree, *ficus religiosa*) having its roots above and branches below, who is the Resplendent One, i.e. Brahman. Al-Biruni's reference to this tree is substantially correct. The ideas embodied in the *Bhagvad-Gita*, X, 26; XV, 1-2 and *Katha Upanisad*, 11, 31, may be explained as follows:

The Lord Sri Bhagavan explained to Arjuna that he is the soul of all objects, inherent in all things, and is the origin centre and end as well. He has, figuratively speaking, his roots upwards and spreads with branches downwards like the Asvattha tree.³⁴

According to the educated people *Isvara* is "self-sufficing, beneficent one, who gives without receiving. They consider the Unity of God as absolute, but that everything beside God which may appear as a unity, is really a plurality of things. The existence of God they consider

as a real existence because everything that exists, exists through Him. It is not impossible to think that the existing beings are not and that he is, but it is impossible to think that he is not and they are".³⁵

Al-Biruni refers to God as the First Cause, *i.e.* the ultimate cause of all causes and adds that the ancient Greeks held the same view as that held by the Hindus and that it is also akin to that of the Sufis. This God may also be the Necessary Being of Avicenna.

He also states that the common Hindus who are not educated have anthropomorphic ideas about God but educated Hindus abhor them. An uneducated person in order to describe God's omniscience says that He sees through one thousand eyes.³⁶

It seems rather strange that even as a Muslim, he attempts to give a rational explanation for idol worship (Ch. XI). He explains the origin of idol worship as inherent in the nature of man stating that this practice is restricted to the uneducated low caste people. He writes:

"It is well known that the popular mind leans towards the sensible world, and has an aversion to the world of abstract thought which is only understood by highly educated people, of whom in every time and every place there are only few. And as common people will only acquiesce in pictorial representations, many of the leaders of religious communities have so far deviated from the right path as to give such imagery in their books and houses of worship, like the Jews and Christians, and more than all, the Manichaeans".³⁷

He further adds:

"For those who march on the path of liberation or those who study philosophy and theology, and who desire abstract truth which they call *sara*, are entirely free from worshipping anything but God alone, and would never dream of worshipping an image manufactured to represent him".³⁸

Some important idols worshipped since antiquity are mentioned by him such as, the idol of the Sun of Multan called Aditya, the idol of Thaneshar Visnu called Cakrasvamin, the idol Sarada of Kashmir and others.

Creation is a serious question for the Hindus as it is for the Christians and the Muslims. Al-Biruni has discussed the Hindu view of creation and has correctly stated that the whole creation is regarded as a unity. Under intelligibilia he speaks of God as the supreme intelligence; individuals-distinct souls as *Purusa* and material substance or nature or *Prakriti* as Sensibilia with its twenty-four components. He should have clearly stated that *Purusa* is distinct from nature or *Prakriti*. God is the creator in the sense that nature or *Prakriti* evolves out of Him. There are however many different views regarding creation or the evolution of the universe which Al-Biruni has not discussed.³⁹

The semitic ideas about God and creation are quite different from the Indian ideas of the same. The former advocates the theory of first creation and creation *ex-nihilo* but according to the Indian thinker there is no first creation and creation takes place out of eternal atoms which are co-existent with God.

Al-Biruni's views about the Hindu concept of God as stated above may be, generally speaking, accepted as correct. He has discussed mainly the educated people's theistic view of God and is silent about the monistic and pantheistic views about Him as discussed in the *Upanisads* and fully explained in the *Advaita Vedanta*.⁴⁰

Al-Biruni refers to the theory of action (*Karman*) and states that the Hindus differ among themselves about the definition of action and the agent. Some believe that God is the source of action and consider him as the universal cause. After having outlined the different views about action and the agent, al-Biruni remarks: "All these opinions are incorrect. The truth is that action entirely belongs to matter, for matter binds the soul, causes it to wander about in different shapes and then sets it free. Therefore, matter is the agent, all that belongs to matter helps it to accomplish action. But the soul is not an agent, because it is devoid of the different faculties."⁴¹

He also refers to the theory of desireless action (*Niskama-Karma*) which has been explained in the *Bhagvad Gita* III, 30; IV, 21; VI, 10.

Al-Biruni quotes from the *Samkhya* on the subject of the soul in connection with his discussion of action and the agent. He writes:

"Some people say that the soul is not active and the matter not living; that God who is self-sufficient is He who unites them and separates them from each other; that therefore in reality, He himself is the agent. Action proceeds from Him in such a way that He causes both the soul and the matter to move, as that which is living and powerful moves that which is dead and weak."⁴²

The soul or self, i.e. *atman* is the living agent which becomes connected with matter because of the activities (*Karman*) of the individuals concerned and it always seeks release from the physical connections. But the soul on its part is guided by the intelligence with which it is inspired by God. God can be realised by knowledge (*Jnana*) and right action or desireless action which is the way to *Moksa* or liberation from the earthly bondage. The migration of the soul continues until this liberation is achieved. Al-Biruni has correctly illustrated the transmigration of the soul from one body to the other as something like the old clothings cast off and new clothings put on."⁴³

Explaining the process of the transmigration of the soul he writes: "The transmigration or *at-Tanasukh* begins from low stages and rises to higher and better ones, not the contrary, as we state on purpose, since the one is *a priori* as possible as the other. The difference of these lower and higher stages depends upon the difference of the actions, and this again results from the quantitative and qualitative diversity of the temperaments and the various degrees of combinations in which they appear".⁴⁴

The soul is always longing to be united with the body and it is so united by the intermediary spirits. On the other hand matter also is seeking union with the soul. "Matter produces and shows all kinds of possibilities, which it possesses, to its pupil, the soul, and carries it round through all classes of vegetable and animal beings. Hindus compare matter of *Prakrti* to a dancing girl who is clever in her art and knows well what effect each motion and pose of hers will produce".⁴⁵

As regards the relation between soul, matter and intelligence, he writes: "People say the soul resembles the rain-water which comes down from heaven, always the same and of the same nature. However, if it is gathered in vessels placed for the purpose, vessels of different materials of gold, silver, glass, earthenware, clay or bittersalt earth, it begins to differ in appearance, taste, and smell. Thus the soul does not influence matter in any way, except in this, that it gives matter life by being in close contact with it. Then when matter begins to act, the result is different, in conformity with one of the three primary forces which happens to be dominant and conformably to the mutual assistance which the other two latent forces afford to the former. This assistance may be given in various ways, as the fresh oil, the dry wick, and the smoking fire help each other to produce light. The soul is in matter like the rider in a carriage, being attended by the senses, who drive the carriage, according to the rider's intentions. But the soul for its part is guided by the intelligence with which it is inspired by God. This intelligence they describe as that by which the reality of things is apprehended, which shows the way to the knowledge of God, and to such actions as are like and praised by everybody".⁴⁶

Moksa or release of the soul signifies emancipation from *Samsara* (earthly existence), and physical connection or connection between body and soul, an idea also found in the teachings of the Sufis. But *Moksa* does not literally signify the soul's distinction, although al-Biruni seems to hint at the idea of separation of body and soul.⁴⁷ He speaks of different paths leading to *Moksa*, i.e. knowledge worship and renunciation as indicated in Chap. IX of the *Bhagvad-Gita* and Patanjali's *Yogasutra*.

As regards matter, al-Biruni states that it arises from a conjunction of "three primary forces" which stand for three different *gunas*, viz. *Sattva* (manifestation strand); *Rajas* (force strand) and *Tamas* (mass strand). They interact on one another and produce matter.⁴⁸ He

explains correctly that nature (*Prakṛti*), signifies the state of equilibrium in these forces (*Samyavastha*). This theory has been reproduced from the *Samkhya* school of thought with which he is quite familiar. But he has perhaps committed an error by calling these *gunas* powers (*Quwwa*), because all three of them are not powers as *Rajas* and *Tamas*, apart from *Sattva*, may not be considered as powers. The *gunas* are constant elements of matter. Al-Biruni has correctly explained that nature is called *avyakta*, an indiscernible unmanifest principle, and the natural object *vyakta* or having shape and elements etc. He adds that the union of the abstract and the shaped matter is called *prakṛti* or nature or material substance. According to the Hindus, there are five elements in the world—ether, wind, fire, water and earth which are called *Mahabhuta* or great elements.⁴⁹ Then he goes on to explain each of these five elements.⁵⁰ He writes: "The air is the medium between fire and water which are opposed to each other by these two qualities, for the air is related to the fire in tenuity and to the water in density and by either of these qualities it renders the one capable of mixing with the other."⁵¹

Now as regards the means of *Moksa* or liberation, al-Biruni speaks of three ways leading to *Moksa* or release from earthly bondage, viz. worship, knowledge and action or conduct, which are viewed according to the Hindu terminology as *Bhakti*, (lit. devotion) *Jnana* or knowledge by learning, etc. and *Karma* or *Kriya Yoga* or conduct in an ethical sense, including renunciation *Sannyasa*. He quotes profusely from the *Bhagvad-Gita*, Chapter VII in support of his statements. The knowing person rejoices while acquiring knowledge. Liberation through knowledge can only be obtained by abstaining from evil, the branches of which may be classified as cupidity, wrath and ignorance. Besides these three ways, he refers to a fourth one which is of an illusory nature called *Rasayana* consisting of alchemical tricks with drugs, etc. and cites *Yogasutra* as his source.⁵² It is doubtful whether this reference is correct as it is not traceable in Patanjali's *Yogasutra* as it is extant now.

BUDDHISM

Al-Biruni does not write much on Buddhism and whatever information he provides on this religion is derived from secondary sources. He calls the Buddhists or Shamanians i.e. *Sramana* as *Muhammira* or wearers of red-robe. The trinity of the Buddhist system i.e. *Buddha*, *Dharma*, *Samgha* are mentioned and Buddha is called *Buddhodana*⁵³ which is an error for something like the son of *Suddhodana*. In so far as their manners and customs are concerned their practice of disposing of their dead bodies by throwing them into running water is recorded.⁵⁴ Some Buddhist authors are mentioned and a book called *Cudamani* is attributed to Buddha himself.⁵⁵ The views of Buddha on cosmography are discussed but their sources are not given.⁵⁶ Twice does al-Biruni record that there is a conflict between Buddha and Zoroaster but does not give details.⁵⁷ Bihar or Vihara of Buddhistic origin is mentioned by him in the meaning of temple and the like.

A discussion on Buddhism as a religion different from Hinduism or information about the different schools of Buddhism or its metaphysics are not found in this book. The Chinese

traveller Hiuan Tsang (1st half of the seventh century A.D.) recorded useful information about Buddhism flourishing in India when he visited it. The causes of al-Biruni's lack of adequate knowledge about Buddhism is stated to be that he could never come across a book on Buddhism and never met a Buddhist from whom he could obtain first-hand information on the subject. This is due to the fact that Buddhism had almost disappeared from Central Asia, Khurasan, Afghanistan and North-Western India⁵⁸ in the first half of the eleventh century when this book on India was written.

NATIONAL CHARACTER

Al-Biruni discusses certain "peculiarities of the national character of the Hindus, deeply rooted in them and manifest in everybody, such as their insular character and narrow mindedness" which make their society utterly closed and impose certain limitations on their knowledge. He writes:

".... the Hindus believe that there is no country but theirs, no nation like theirs, no science like theirs... They are by nature niggardly in communicating that which they know, and they take the greatest care possible to withhold it from men of another caste among their own people still much more, of course, from any foreigner".⁵⁹

Al-Biruni was critical of the rigidly conservative Indian society and of the obscurantism and chauvinism of the people of India of his time and believed that, unlike the present generation of Hindus, their ancestors had been much more broadminded. Concerning his Indian contemporaries he observed:

"Their haughtiness is such that if you tell them of any science or scholar in Khurasan and Persia, they will think you to be both an ignorant person and a liar. If they travelled and mixed with other nations, they would soon change their mind, for their ancestors were not as narrow-minded as the present generation is. One of their scholars, Varahamihira, in a passage where he calls on the people to honour the Brahmans, says: "The Greeks, though impure, must be honoured, since they were trained in sciences, and therein excelled others. What, then, are we to say of a Brahman, if he combines with his purity the height of science?". In former times, the Hindus used to acknowledge that the progress of Science due to the Greek is much more important than that which is due to themselves. But from this passage of Varahamihira alone you can see that a self-lauding man he is, whilst he gives himself airs as doing justice to others".⁶⁰

Between Varahamihira (ca 505 A.D.) and al-Biruni (d.1050 A.D.), a period of about five hundred and forty-five years had elapsed. This would be ample time for decadence of the character of any nation. Thus, al-Biruni's criticism, although directed against the Hindus of his day is not focused on a uniquely Indian trait. Such decadence can befall any people given the appropriate configuration of historical forces.

INDIAN CULTURE

Al-Biruni has written not only on Indian society, religions and philosophy but also recorded his observations on almost all aspects of Indian culture and civilization. He writes on education, regional languages, scripts, writing materials, weights and measures, Sanskrit gramatical literature and metrics, definition and measures of time, metrology, chronology and description of the eras and related subjects.⁶¹ He gives a detailed account of the Indian scientific literature of his time and also on pseudo-sciences flourishing in India, such as alchemy (*Rasayana*). He is specially interested in computational astronomy of India and gives an account of the different schools of Indian astronomy and the well-known Indian astronomers and their achievements. Geography, geology, cosmography and even astrology have not escaped his attention. Being a mathematician, he has discussed Indian arithmetic and his separate treatise on Indian Rule of Three is well-known.⁶²

GEOLOGY AND GEOGRAPHY

His geological observations on the formation of the land mass of India once having been a sea is scientific. He writes:

"One of these plains is India, limited in the south by the above-mentioned Indian Ocean, and on three other sides by the lofty mountains, the waters of which flow down to it. But if you have seen the soil of India with your own eyes and meditate on its nature—if you consider the rounded stones found in the earth however deeply you dig, stones that are huge near the mountains and where the rivers have a violent current; stones that are of smaller size at greater distance from the mountains, and where the streams flow more slowly; stones that appear pulverised in the shape of sand where the streams begin to stagnate near their mouths and near the sea—if you consider all this, you could scarcely help thinking that India has once been a sea which by degrees has been filled up by the alluvium of the streams".⁶³

There is a geographical and physical description of India in this book; its rivers and oceans, their sources and courses. It contains a description of earth and heaven according to the religious views of the Hindus based on their traditional literature, ideas relating to the pole, especially of mount Meru following the authors of Puranas and others on the basis of Traditions recorded the same. A definition of the inhabitable earth of Lanka being the Cupola of the earth,⁶⁴ according the Hindus, are given in detail.

The ten directions called *Rahucakra*, the itineraries of the distances between the several cities the road system of India together with the distance between the boundaries of the country are recorded in some detail⁶⁵. He twice explains the origin of the Dibat Maldives and Laccadives and twice the configuration of borders of the Indian Ocean.

Al-Biruni gives an accurate account of the geography of the *Puranas*⁶⁶ which were available to him in his time and width and depth of his knowledge of this literature of the Hindus are just perplexing.

ASTRONOMY & ASTROLOGY

Al-Biruni was primarily trained as an astronomer is most likely that he was an astrologer by profession and it is not unlikely that he was attracted to wards India because of its advanced astrology. There are good reasons to believe that he was attached to the court of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna for sometime as an astrologer. He has discussed these two subjects in great detail in this Book preceded by a full chapter⁶⁷ entirely devoted to a discussion on the Hindu literature in astronomy and astrology. It has been found on examination that more than one fourth of the book deals with astronomy only, running into more than twenty chapters. On comparison and scrutiny of the classical Sanskrit astronomical texts they have been found to be almost accurate and his references also are,generally speaking, correct.

Al-Biruni discusses the following, giving all details and mathematical calculations with reference to original sources:

On the names of the Planets, the signs of the Zodiac, the Lunar Stations, and related subjects; On the shape of Heaven and Earth according to the Hindu Astronomers; On the First two Motions of the Universe (that from East to West according to ancient Astronomers, and the Precession of the Equinoxes) both according to the Hindu Astronomers and the Authors of the *Puranas*; On that Difference of various Places which we call the difference of Longitude; Definition of the Terms "*Kalpa*" and "*Caturyuga*", and an Explication of the one by the other; On the Division of the *Caturyuga* into *Yugas*, and the different opinions regarding the Latter; A Description of the four *Yugas*, and of all that is expected to take place at the end of the fourth *Yuga*; On the *Manvantaras*; On the Constellation of the Great Bear; How many Star-cycles there are both in a "*Kalpa*" and in a "*Caturyuga*"; An explanation of the Terms "*Adhimasa*", "*Unaratra*" and the "*Aharganas*", as representing different sums of days; On the calculation of "*Ahargana*" in general that is, the Resolution of years and Months into days, and *vice versa*, the composition of years and months out of days; On the *Ahargana*, or the resolution of years into months, according to special Rules which are adopted in the calendars for certain dates or moments of time; On the Computation of the Mean places of the Planets; On the order of the Planets, their distances and sizes; On the stations of the moon; On the Heliacal Risings of the Stars, and on the ceremonies and rites which the Hindus practise at such a moment; How Ebb and Flow follow each other in the ocean; On the Solar and Lunar Eclipses; On the Parvan; On the dominants of the different measures of time in both religious and astronomical relations, and on connected subjects; On the sixty years *Samvatsara*, also called "*Sastyabda*".⁶⁸

In the last chapter of this book al-Biruni presents a substantial study of Hindu astrology—one of the lengthy chapters covering thirty-four pages of the printed text.⁶⁹ He discusses the influence of the seven planets on the celestial world specially on the birth and death of human beings. He was well versed in Greek astrology, so he compares Hindu astrology

with it and the discussion is highly technical. Being keenly interested in this subject he had translated the astrological work entitled *Laghujataka* of Varahamihira (c.A.D.505) giving it the title *Kitab Mawalid as-Saghir li Brahimiha*⁷⁰ and he has given extensive quotations from this book in this chapter. The *Brahatsamhita* of the same author was also available to him and a Persian translation of this book is available at Aligarh. Among the *Puranas* he had used the *Matsya-Purana* and *Vayu-Purana* in writing this chapter. But he does not clearly state whether he believed in astrology as true or false because it was prohibited in Islam. Perhaps it is for this reason that no work on astrology in Sanskrit was translated into Arabic before al-Biruni.

However Sachau makes the following observation:-

"That he believed in the action of the planets on the sublunary world, I take for certain: though he nowhere says so. It would hardly be intelligible why he should have spent so much time and labour on the study of Greek and Indian astrology if he had not believed in the truth of the thing."⁷¹

ALCHEMY

One chapter is devoted to Hindu sciences which feed on the ignorance of people.⁷² Witchcraft and alchemy or *Rasayana* i.e. turning base metal into gold are discussed and rejected. Al-Biruni considers alchemy as a fraud and a pseudo-science. He writes:

Thinking of the horrid practices of *Rasayana*, i.e. the art of making gold and of making old people young, etc. al-Biruni bursts out into sarcastic remarks. He expresses his indignation against alchemy in the following words:

"The greediness of the ignorant Hindu princes for gold-making does not know any limit. If any one of them wanted to carry out a scheme of gold-making and people advised him to kill a number of fine little children, the monster would not refrain from such a crime; he would throw them into the fire. If this precious science of *Rasayana* were banished to the utmost limits of the world, where it is unattainable to anybody, it would be the best".⁷³

MEDICINE

But al-Biruni believed in the usefulness of chemicals and minerals used in medicine. He is the author of two important books—one on minerals and precious metals and stones and the other on simple drugs. But he does not write much on Indian medicine. Most probably, no Arabic translation of the book of either Caraka or Susruta was available to him. However, it can be stated for certain that a copy of the *Firdaws al-Hikmah* by 'Ali ibn Rabban at-Tabari⁷⁴ (d.c.247/861) which contains a substantial discourse on the Ayurveda, was at his disposal. It is from this book that he copies Caraka's version of the origin of the Ayurveda.⁷⁵ He also gives the weights according to the book of Caraka. But Susruta is not mentioned anywhere in this book.

MERITS

The catholicity of al-Biruni's mind impresses the readers most. At one place, he states that the Hindu scholars enjoyed the help of God or they were divinely inspired.⁷⁶ A Toledan historian-scientist, Qadi Said al-Andalusi(d.1070 A.D.), had made a similar remark about the Hindus.⁷⁷ Although idol worship is strictly prohibited in Islam, yet he writes one full chapter on this subject giving an explanation for this practice.

He duly appreciates the intellectual achievements of the Hindus stating that they are excellent philosophers, mathematicians and astronomers adding that the Muslims can learn a lot from them, for example about the construction of holy ponds with stepped embankment.⁷⁸

His impartiality and objectivity are due to his love of truth but he offers criticism where he believes it is called for. For example, he strongly condemns the art and practice of *Rasayana* (alchemy) as stated above. Further, he criticizes the habit of Hindu scientists who mix scientific ideas with purely religious beliefs and theological matters.⁷⁹ He is critical of Brahmagupta for expounding two theories of the eclipses – one scientific and the other popular and theological⁸⁰ but this criticism is without any malice or prejudice. It is due to his love of truth that he defends Aryabhata I, against the harsh criticism of his astronomical ideas by Brahmagupta.⁸¹ After having discussed the religious practices of the Hindus in an impartial and objective manner, he does not criticize them but adds that they are quite different from his own.⁸²

Like modern scientists, he follows a comparative method. Each chapter consists of three parts which are wellplanned. In the beginning, he gives a precis of the subject, followed by a thorough discussion; then a comparison of the theories of the Hindus with those of the Ancient Greeks and others to which he adds his own explanation. Al-Biruni clarifies this point as follows:

"My book is nothing but a simple historic record of facts. I shall place before the readers the theories of Hindus exactly as they are, and I shall mention in connection with them similar theories of Greeks in order to show the relationship existing between them"⁸³

The information are derived mainly from original Sanskrit works and al-Biruni gives extensive quotations from them in Arabic translation. Consequently, a number of quotations from lost Sanskrit texts have been preserved which increases the value and importance of al-Biruni's book. This is specially evident in his chapters on Hinduism, Philosophy, Astronomy and other subjects.

Sachau remarks:-

He surpassed his predecessors by going back upon the original Sanskrit sources, trying to check his pandits by whatever Sanskrit he had contrived to learn, by making new and more

accurate translations, and by his conscientious method of testing the data of the Indian Astronomers by calculation. His work represents a scientific renaissance in comparison with the aspirations of the scholars working in Bagdad under the first Abbaside Khalifs".⁸⁴

There were several Greek, Chinese, Arab and Persian travellers, sailors and merchants who visited India before al-Biruni. They have left accounts of their perception of Indian society and culture but these do not possess the merits discussed above. Not based on textual research, they are devoid of details, depth, scientific and scholarly accuracy. Most of them contain disjointed and disconnected statements, sometimes not relevant to each other and not based on original sources. Some of them have recorded only interesting and strange stories based on hearsay.⁸⁵

An important contribution of al-Biruni which should not be overlooked is that he studied the scientific books of India and made the results available to the Arab-Muslim scientists. Indian sciences specially astronomy were not so well-known to the Arab world of learning before the writing of this book in Arabic. For these reasons, al-Biruni has been hailed by modern historians of science as a great synthesizer and transmitter of scientific knowledge.⁸⁶

DEMERITS

The accounts of al-Biruni suffer from several demerits. Although its subject matter is India, the book deals actually with northern India only. It does not discuss the culture and civilization of southern India at all.

The following is a highly exaggerated and incorrect statement about the invasion of India by Sultan Mahmud and the destruction caused by him :

"Mahmud utterly ruined the prosperity of the country, and performed there wonderful exploits, by which the Hindus became like atoms of dust scattered in all directions, and like a tale of old in the mouth of the people. Their scattered remains cherish, or course, the most inveterate aversion towards all Muslims."⁸⁷

It deals with Hinduisim only as expounded by the Brahmans and their beliefs which were known in Sind, Punjab, Kashmir and other parts of northern India. It does not give any substantial information about Buddhism and Jainism⁸⁸ which flourished in several regions of India at the time of al-Biruni. He does not mention several Hindu, Buddhists and Jain sects scattered all over India although he shows much interest in Indian religions.

It is correct that foreigners were not admitted into the Indian Society but his statement that it was a completely closed society is rather harsh. The Greeks, the Scythians, the Huns and others had invaded India and settled in this country.

When he explains that one of the causes of the decline of Indian sciences was that the Hindus mixed up critical and uncritical theories on the one hand and science and theology on the other, he himself committed the error of mixing the scientific and religious books of the Hindus.

He has committed several errors due to misinformation and misunderstanding of the original sources, his lack of expertise in Sanskrit which have been pointed out by E.C. Sachau in his preface to the English translation.⁸⁹ There are incorrect statements regarding the road system of India and the distance between different towns due to lack of information and communication. They suggest that he did not travel in India extensively from coast to coast and obtained information mainly about its road system from written sources and reports of travellers.⁹⁰

His discussion of the subjects is generally unbalanced. It is found that he devotes long chapters to minor subjects in which he is interested whereas several important subjects are either left out completely or discussed in a cursory manner.

However, the above demerits do not detract from the value, importance and originality of the *Kitab al-Hind* of al-Biruni which gives an impartial, objective and critical perception of the society, culture and civilization of India in detail around 1030 A.D. Any historian who desires to write on these subjects for the period under consideration should not ignore this book.⁹¹

Professor M. Athar Ali, a modern historian has made the following observations about this book with which this writer finds himself in complete agreement.

"The compilation of al-Biruni's *Kitabul Hind* was a unique event in the history of mankind, unique because there has been no other instance in pre-modern times, of one of the greatest intellectuals of one civilization studying and analysing with such range and depth, the major aspects of another civilization. In words borrowed from reviews of Needham's great work on China, it was at once an act of recognition and a great act of intercultural communication. We are here introduced to a rigorously scientific spirit, a detailed, balanced, scrutiny of Sanskrit materials, a close knowledge of Greek philosophy and science, which the author calls upon to assess the level of Indian cultural and intellectual development, and a truly critical approach as well to the ideas and institutions to his own Islamic milieu. Sachau wonders how al-Biruni, under the shadow of Mahmud could speak of Hindu scholars "who enjoy the help of God". He was ready to seek reason behind many of the myths and rituals that he examined with such care, just as he could condemn with straightforward frankness the inanities or concealments that he found in his texts. It was surely a seminal moment when al-Biruni conveyed to his readers the view, tentatively nurtured in India, that "the earth moves while the sun is resting".⁹²

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2. Mohammad Habib, *Politics and Society During the Early Medieval Period* ed. by K.A. Nizami, Vol. II (New Delhi 1981); Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni, pp. 36-104; Muhammad Nagim, *The Life and Times of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna* (Cambridge, 1931) pp. 271.
3. See "Al-Biruni Ki Jai Paydaish Ka Qadiya" by Farman Fatehpuri (Urdu) in *Al-Biruni Commemorative Volume* edited by Hakim Mohammad Said (Karachi, 1979) pp 827-837. The unedited MS *Kitab Qanun ad-Dunya* (Topkapi Sarai Library, Istanbul, Rewan No. 1638, Fol. 270 verse) also stated that he belonged to Birun a town in Sind in India.
4. J.S. Misra, *Al-Biruni: An Eleventh Century Historian*, (Varanasi, 1985) p. 10 (Incorrect statement).
5. M.M. Menon, "Al-Biruni and his contributions to Medieval Muslim Geography" in *Islamic Culture*, XXXIII (Oct. 1959), pp. 213-214.
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7. B.N. Puri, *Hindi Viswakosh (Encyclopedia)* states "Al-Biruni Bharat men Chalis Varsh Rahe" Vol. I (Varanasi, 1960) p. 213. This statement is borrowed from Al-Bayhaqi, *Tarikh al-Hukama Islam* ed. by Md. Kurd Ali (Damascus, 1396/1976) p. 72 and al-Shahrzuri, *Nuzhat al-Arwah wa Raudat Al-Afrah* ed. by Syed Khurshid Ahmad, 2 Vols. 1st. ed. (Hyderabad, 1396/1976).
8. Abu'l Kalam Azad, "Abu'r-Rayhan al-Biruni wa Jughrafiyat al-Alam" (Arabic) in *Thaqafat al-Hind* (New Delhi, June, 1952) pp 2-3 and pp. 25-27. Also in *Islam aur Assi Jadid* (Urdu) (New Delhi, 1980), pp. 112.
9. Arabic text Hyderabad ed. chapter XXXI, 270/Eng. translation by Edward C. Sachau (New Delhi reprint, 1964, I, 371. Henceforth the page nos. of the above text will be followed by the page numbers of the said Eng. translation.
10. Although he gives copious information about Kashmir yet it cannot be stated for certain that he had travelled inside Kashmir.
11. pp. 155-169/I, 196-212.
12. In the bibliography of D.J.Boilot published in 1955 180 titles are included. After that his Arabic translation of the *Karana Tilaka* by Bijayanand ed. by N.A. Baloch (Sind, 1973) has been published and a MS of his *Kitab ad-Durar fi Sath al-Ukar* has been found in the Bodlaian Library of Oxford.
13. For a list of these titles see S.Maqbul Ahmad and others, *Al-Biruni : An Introduction to His Life and Writings on the Indian Sciences* (New Delhi, Indian National Science Academy, 1971) pp 17-18.
14. Based on the oldest extant MS in the Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris, Schefer No. 6080. This is definitely an improvement on the Sachau's text but it is still possible to present a more critical and correst text by a team of three scholars-expert in Arabic, well-versed in all aspects of Indian culture and civilization including Indian fundamental sciences and a specialist in Sanskrit and other foreign languages.
15. One by S. Chand and Co. , New Delhi, 1964 and the other by Low Price Publication, Delhi, 1989. In both Vols. I & II are bound in one.

16. See M.S. Khan's Bibliography mentioned in note I above, pp. 68, 69, abridgements published by Mohammad ibn Ahmad, Ahmad Hasan Dani, Qeyamuddin Ahmad and Ainslee T. Embree.
17. See M.S. Khan, "A Bibliography of Soviet Publications on al-Biruni" in *Janus* (Amsterdam, Oct. 1975) pp. 279-288.
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19. Edward C. Sachau, Eng. Introduction to the edition of the Arabic text (London, 1887) - "The Author's study of Sanskrit", pp. XIV - XIX, See Md. Rida Jatali Naini and N.S. Shukla, *lughat Sanskrit dar ma lil-Hind* (Tehiaw, 1353 A.H. Shamsi) pp. 286-16.
20. See M.S. Khan, "An Examination of al-Biruni's knowledge of Indian Astronomy", in *The History of Oriental Astronomy* Proceedings of an International Astronomical Union, Colloquium No. 91, New Delhi, India 13-16, November 1985, Edited by G. Swarup and others, Cambridge University Press (Cambridge, 1987) pp. 139-145. This paper also mentions all the Indian astronomical works and astronomers known to al-Biruni. Al-Biruni had translated the *Karana Tilaka* of Bijayananda into Arabic. See note 12 above.
21. See his *Maqala fi Rashikat al-Hind* in the *Rasaij al-Biruni* 1st ed. (Hyderabad: 1367/1948) pp. 30.
22. He had translated the *Brhatsamhita* and the *Loghujataka* of Varahamihira - both dealing with astrology - into Arabic. Ahmad Hasan Dani, "Al-Biruni on Sanskrit Literature" in *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol I/4 (Karachi, Oct. 1953) pp. 301-317.
23. The Sanskrit translation on the coin runs as follows:
 Avyaktam ekam, Muhammada avatara
 There is no God but God and Muhammad is His avatar (incarnation?) (The use of awatar for Rasul is obviously incorrect).
 Ayam Tarikh Muhammadpura ghatta ahatah
 This tankah (silver coin) has been struck in the mint at Muhammadpur (Lahore).
 Nirpati Mahmuda; Jinayana Samvati
 King Mahmud ___ in the year of the hijrah of the Prophet (P.B.H.).
24. 75-76/I, 99-100 (Chapter IX).
25. 77/I, 101
26. 75/I, 99
27. 81-82/I, 107
28. 470/II, 155
29. *Loc. cit.*
30. These subjects are discussed in separate chapters but scattered all over the book.
31. See M.S. Khan, "Al-Biruni on Indian Metaphysics" in *Islamic Culture*, (Hyderabad, July, 1981) pp. 161-168. E.C. Sachau has given a list of Sanskrit books quoted in this book specially as sources of the chapters on theology and philosophy. See his Preface pp. XXXIX.
32. PP 96-98/I, 125-128; Chap XII.

33. P 20/I, 27.
34. P 66/I, 86-87 The Arabic word used is *Ashwat*. See H.K.De Chowdhury, *God in Indian Religion* (Calcutta, 1969), Chap, V, pp. 152-156.
35. P 23/I, 31.
36. PP 23-24/I, 32.
37. PP 84-85/I, III
38. P 85/I, 113.
39. Such as those discussed by *Nyaya, Vaishesika, Vedanta, Mimamsa* and others. They are different from each other and sometimes diametrically opposed to each other. Abu'l Fadl has given a detailed account of these schools of Indian philosophy in Persian in his *A'in-i Akbari*. See Surendranath Das Gupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1951), Vol. I, Chapters VIII and IX, pp. 274-405.
40. *Advaita* is the monistic interpretation of the *Upanisad, Gita* and *Brahmasutra*. It is canonized as the following four principal prepositions (i) All this is Brahma or the Absolute in the sense of his manifestation (ii) this self/soul is Brahma or Absolute self. (iii) I myself am Absolute and (iv) He is the self and the Absolute.
41. P 23/I, 31. This writer would translate it as ".... all these opinions are far from being correct", or *Swab*.
42. P 22/I, 30. The original *Samkhya* is lost. The extant *Samkhyasutras* are very late works.
43. P 39/I, 52; As abandoning clothes that are decayed, a man takes other clothes that are new, so the dweller in the body, abandoning bodies that are decayed, goes into other bodies that are new. (Ch.II, Verse 22). See *The Bhagavad Gita* or the Lord's Lay, tr. by Mohini M. Chatterji, Calcutta (2nd ed.) R.cambray & Co. (1882) p.4.
44. P 38/I, 51.
45. P 35/I, 47. E.C. Sachau's translation is not always correct and clear. Therefore, this writer has made alterations here and there for the sake of clarity and accuracy.
46. P 37/I, 49.
47. PP 53-54/I, 71 which gives quotations from Socrates found in Plato's *Phaedo*.
48. P 30/I, 40, The Arabic words used are *Satu, Raju* and *Tamu*.
49. P 30-31/I, 40-41.
50. P 31/I, 41.
51. P 34/I, 45.
52. PP 61-62/I, 80-81.
53. P 30/I, 40-41; P 122/I, 158.
54. P 479/II, 169.
55. It discussed the knowledge of the unknown. See p. 122/I, 158.
56. P. 68/I, 91.
57. P 206/I, 249; 276/I, 326; See Surendranath Dasgupta, *op.cit.* Vol. I, Chap. V, Buddhist Philosophy pp. 78-168.

58. P 206/I, 249, E.C.Sachau, Preface P. XLV.
59. P 17/I, 22.
60. PP 17-18/I, 22-23.
61. PP 342-351/II, 1-14. *Fi't Tawarikh bi'l-Ijmal* or *A Summary Description of the Eras*. Al-Biruni has written an excellent book on the calendars and eras. See his *al-Athar al-Baqiyah 'an al-urun al-Khaliyah* ed. by Edward C. Sachau, (Baghdad reprint, 1963), pp. LXXII+30+362. Eng. trans. as *The Chronology of Ancient Nations*, (Lahore reprint, 1983) pp. 464.
62. See note 22 above.
63. PP. 157-158/I, 198.
64. PP 260-263/I, 306-310, Chapter XXX, Fi Dhikr Lank wa huwa'l-Ma'aruf bi qubbat al-Ard.
65. See Chapters XVIII, XXV, XXVIII and XXIX.
66. Cf. S. Muzafer 'Ali, *The Geography of the puranas*, 3rd Ed. (New Delhi, PPH, 1983) pp. 234.
67. PP 117-123/I, 152-159. Chapter XIV.
68. David Pingree, "Al-Biruni's knowledge of Sanskrit Astronomical Texts" in *The Scholar and the Saint* ed. by Peter J. Chowlkowski, (New York, 1975), pp. 67-81; M. S. Khan's paper mentioned in note 20 above.
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71. E.C. Sachau, Preface pp. XXV-XXVI.
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74. Edited by M.Z.Siddiqi, (Berlin, 1938). The discourse on the Ayurveda covers pp. 557-624.
75. PP 321-322/I, 382-383.
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80. PP 435/437/II, 110-113. Satya Prakash Saraswati: *Critical Study of Brahmagupta and his Works: The most distinguished Indian Astronomer and Mathematician of the Sixth Century A.D.* (1986), 344 pp. fig.

81. See M.S. Khan, "Aryabhata I and al-Biruni" in *Indian Journal of History of Science*, Vol. 12/2 (New Delhi, 1978) pp 237-244. See Text pp 316-317/Eng. trans. I, 376.
82. P 144/I, 179. He states "Many Hindu customs differ from those of our country and of our time to such a degree as to appear to us simply monstrous. One might almost think that they had intentionally changed them into the opposite, for our customs do not resemble theirs, but are the very reverse; and if ever a custom of theirs resembles one of ours, it has certainly just the opposite meaning".
83. P 5/I, 7-8.
84. E.C.Sachau, Preface, P XXXVII.
85. See M.S.Khan, "Al-Biruni the Founder of Indology" in his Forthcoming book *Al-Biruni and Indian Sciences*.
86. Al-Biruni has himself made this clear. See text p. 106/I, 137.
87. P 16/I, 22.
88. For the Jaina Philosophy see Surendranath Das Gupta, *op. cit.* Vol. I, Chapter VI, pp 169-207.
89. This does not mean that all the statements made by Edward C. Sachau in the Preface are correct. This needs thorough revision.
90. For these errors see S. H. Hadivala, *Studies in Indo-Muslim History* (Bombay, 1939) pp 40-59 being the commentary on H.M.Elliot and John Dawson, *The History of India as Told by its Own Historians* Vol.I (London, 1867) pp 44-73 (Rashiduddin from al-Biruni).
91. The Study of Indian Society and culture was not continued by any one after al-Biruni till the time of Akbar the great Moghul whose minister Abu'l Fadl (d./011/1602) presented his perception of Indian Society and Culture in his *Aini-Akbari*. Professor Muzafer Ali, the author of *The Geography of the Puranas*, could have used this work of al-Biruni with great profit. Al-Biruni is generally ignored by the modern authors of India now.
- (92) See his "Encounter and Efflorescence: Genesis of the Medieval Civilization"; Presidential Address Indian History Congress, Golden Jubilee Session, Gorakhpur 1989, (Aligarh : Centre of Advanced Study in History, 1989) p 8.

ROUTES, ROADS AND TRANSPORT IN MEDIEVAL INDIA

SUSHIL CHAUDHURY

ROADS and communication system are the indices not only of the extent of development of a particular state and society but also of the state of trade and economy of a country in a given time. From this point of view, there can be little doubt that the roads and communication system in medieval India indicate a stable and prosperous state as also flourishing trade and commerce, especially during the Mughal period. The aim of the paper is to give a critical account of the overland routes, communication system and modes of transport in medieval India. It should, however, be made clear that given the vast area and the time-frame, we can try to give here only a bird's eye view of the routes, roads and transport in medieval India, underlining their main features and characteristics.

It can be reasonably argued that the twin requirements of trade—both within the country and without in which India had a long and continuous tradition—and political expediency—such as state administration, defence of the kingdom, conquests, revenue collection, movement of big armies with their heavy baggage trains—helped the development of a country-wide network of communication in medieval India. In all probability it seems that the rise of Islam and the dominance of the Arabs in the western India ocean trade in subsequent centuries which was an Arab monopoly till the 15th century forced Indian traders to put more emphasis on the overland route to Central Asia and the Mediterranean region. Thus in the early medieval period India was connected on the mainland with Central Asia, Afghanistan and Persia through the Multan-Quetta route, the Khyber pass and the Kashmir routes.¹ Hence there is no wonder that during this period, caravan of merchants, familiar with this beaten track since ancient days, were frequently passing between India, Bukhara, Iraq and even as far as Damascus.

That trade consideration was an important factor in the development of the communication system is emphasized by Al-Beruni (972-1050) when he wrote that long and good roads were a pre-requisite for extensive trade in northern India. Taking Kanauj as the starting point, he found two roads running to north and north-west. The first went to Kashmir through Shirsharah and Dahmala (capital of Jullunder) terminating at Rajkiri. The other led to Ghazni (Afghanistan) through Panipath, Jhelum and Kabul. He also mentioned a third road from Kanauj running through Ahilwara (Patna) and Bazama (the old capital of Gujarat) to Somnath. Yet another road from Bazama went to Multan where it joined the road running southwards to Loharani (near modern Karachi).²

The direct routes between Ghazni and the Punjab were developed by the Ghaznavid rulers (986-1173). Of these, the most important one ran through Kurraim, Tochi and Gomal passes. The invading army of the Ghaznavids marched beyond Sulaiman range *via* Multan, Uch and

the upper Sindh. The development of this route enabled merchants and caravans from eastern Iran and Ghazni to travel to Gujarat where commercial contact was established with the merchants of the Chalukya kingdom. Though Muizuddin Muhammad bin Sam seems to have led his armies once or twice over the Khyber in order to pass *via* Peshawar, this route was developed as an avenue of trade only under the Mughals.

The two centuries that elapsed between the visit of Al-Beruni and the establishment of the Turko-Afghan dynasty were marked by a series of struggles among the independent kingdoms such as Bengal, Ajmer, Kanauj, and the Turks of the Punjab and Ghazni. Perhaps trade routes were also active, as indicated by occasional references in the sources, between the Turkish dominions in the north and north-west Bengal. It has been said that when Bakhtiyar Khalji (1197-98) invaded Nadia, the capital of Lakhnauti, the ruler Laksmāna Sena first thought that his followers were horse-dealers.³

In fact, the Turks realised the strategic and commercial importance of a good communication system. They repaired existing roads and built new ones. Faced with the serious challenge of the Mongol invasions, the Sultans of Delhi, in the 13th Century, built a series of well-garrisoned forts and outposts along the route to the north-western frontiers. During this period new routes were linked with the old ones to facilitate the transfer of revenue collections. These new routes played a significant role in connecting the Sultanate's garrison towns with the open market towns in the provinces such as Lahore, Delhi and Oudh. It is because of the Delhi Sultanate's success, especially during the reigns of powerful rulers like Ghiasuddin Balban, Alauddin Khalji and Muhammad bin Tughlaq, that trade and commerce flourished. Ibn Batuta who visited India during this period gives a vivid account of the trading activities of the time. During his travels in India, he found large markets in almost all the towns he visited. The largest market, however, he found in Delhi where goods from different parts of India and abroad were freely available. He made particular mention of rice from Sarsuti, sugar from Kanauj, wheat from Marh, and betel leaf from Dhar which were on sale there. There were also silk and muslin from Bengal and Benares. At Daulatabad, famous for its pearl trade, he found a variety of fruits on sale. It seems that the demands of the imperial court stimulated trade in luxury goods.

We also learn from the account of Ibn Batuta that different commodities from the inland towns of Gujarat and in the Deccan were carried to the west coast for export. Though he mentions that travel on some roads was unsafe, it appears from his account that the supply of diverse goods from different places to the main emporia remained uninterrupted. Copper and horses imported through the port of Dhabol in the Deccan were traded in the interior for cloth, wheat, millet and pulses.⁴

In his encyclopaedic work, *Masalikul Absar wa Mamalikul Absar*, in Arabic, Shahabuddin Al-Umari, a resident of Egypt and Damascus where he died in 1348 and who never visited

India, gives an interesting account of different parts of India, based on the information gathered from travelling merchants. This clearly indicates that trade flourished all the same between India and the Middle East in the 14th century as well.⁵

For the purpose of imperial defence as well as for the convenience of the people, Sher Shah connected the important places of his kingdom by a chain of excellent roads. The longest of these, the Grand Trunk Road, extended for 1,500 kos (1 kos = 2 miles) from Sonargaon in eastern Bengal to the Indus. One road ran from Agra to Burhanpur, another from Agra to Jodhpur and the fort of Chitor, and yet another from Lahore to Multan. He built *sarais* and planted trees along the roads. His strict enforcement of law and order, and his action in holding village headmen responsible for highway robbery and murder reduced the dangers involved in travel and thereby stimulated trade.

The Mughal bid to establish a strong government under Akbar led to the construction of new roads, bridges and military outposts which gave the army greater mobility and stimulated the flow of trade. During the Mughal period, provincial governors and district officers were responsible for the safety and improvement of roads. But the principal task of protecting travellers and merchants from robbery and harassment, fell on the zaminders who were required to appoint guards and other officers to look after them. We know from Jahangir's autobiography that he ordered zaminders to plant trees on the routes between Agra and Attock on the Indus and between Agra and Bengal.⁶

It is of great interest to note that under the Mughals, road building and similar activities were planned and supervised by the public works department known as *Diwan-i-Bayutat*. Whenever the emperor started on a journey, campaign or hunting, hundreds of sappers and labourers would be sent in advance by the department to repair and improve the roads.⁷ Father Monseratte was quite impressed by the Mughal organization during Akbar's reign. In his commentary on the Kabul march, he narrated many experiences and made several observations. For instance, he noted that Muhammad Qasim Khan, *Mir Bahr*, who was in charge of roads and bridges, efficiently removed all the obstructions on the roads, levelling them as far as possible to facilitate movements.⁸

The riverine traffic was a significant mode of transportation in medieval India. There were several navigational routes along the Ganges, Jumna, Jhelum and the Indus. It was easier and cheaper to send goods by river than by land, and a large volume of trade was carried on through the rivers, between Agra and the eastern provinces. Textiles, raw silk, sugar, rice and butter were shipped to Agra while Bengal imported mainly salt, cotton and opium.⁹ In the Bengal-Agra route, the transfer point was Patna.¹⁰ Similarly Lahore and Multan sent different commodities in smaller boats down the river Ravi and the Indus to Thatta and Bakkar. Because of the

difficulties in negotiating the land route, most of Kashmir's exports were shipped down the Jhelum to Lahore from where they were sent overland to Agra *via* Sirhind, Karnal and Panipath.¹¹

The overland transportation of merchandise was, however, no less important than the riverine traffic but followed a different pattern. The Gangetic-Doab and the Punjab did not pose much problem but some other regions did. For example, the route to Gujarat, from Agra to Surat *via* Burhanpur or Ahmedabad was more difficult to negotiate. But because of Gujarat's commercial importance and its premier ports for export, these routes were much in use. The road network in eastern India presented different problems.¹² Though Sher Shah had brought about some improvements in the communication system of Bihar and Bengal, the riverine navigation still offered an easier and cheaper way of carrying men and goods. However, the land route from Agra to Patna *via* Benares was quite busy. Jahangir built a road linking these cities, and Peter Munday, who travelled by this route in the rainy season, faced some difficulties but completed his journey.¹³

It seems that during the Mughal period the overland route to Central Asia and Persia *via* Multan and Kabul had been very busy. Because of its importance, the Mughal emperors initiated effective measures to protect and improve it. A bridge was built over the Indus at Attock,¹⁴ customs duties were remitted and new *chowkies* established.¹⁵ At least until the time of Shah Jahan, Agra remained the political and commercial capital of the Mughal empire and the halting place of many caravans coming from different directions. Hawkins estimated that the compass of the country was two years by caravan – the routes being from Qandahar to Agra, from Satgaon [in Bengal] to Agra, from Kabul to Agra, from the Deccan to Agra, from Surat to Agra, from Thatta [in Sindh] to Agra.¹⁶ Indeed in Mughal India, almost all roads led to Agra.¹⁷

It would be interesting to look at the itineraries of two early 17th Century European travellers who had undertaken the journey through the overland route, Steel from Agra to Ispahan and Poser from Ispahan to Agra. We reproduce the relevant information from their diaries in a tabular form indicating the important stages in the route, time taken to travel from one stage to another and the total time taken to complete the journey.¹⁸

Itineraries of Steel (1615) and Poser (1621)
Overland Route: Agra to Ispahan

A. Steel (1615)				
Place	Arrival	Departure	Time Taken (Days)	Stage
Agra	*	3 April	*	*
Lahore	24 April	13 May	22	Agra-Lahore
Multan	22 May	2 June	10	Lahore-Multan
Qandahar	7 July	23 July	36	Multan-Qandahar
Ispahan	19 Sept.	*	59	Qandahar-Ispahan
Actual Travelling : 127 days Total Time Taken : 170 days				
B. Poser (1621)				
Place	Arrival	Departure	Time Taken (Days)	Stage
Ispahan	*	18 July	*	*
Yazd	1 Aug.	*	15	Ispahan-Yazd
Farah	2 Sept.	*	*	*
Girisk	14 Sept.	18 Sept.	*	*
Qandahar	21 Sept.	30 Sept.	4	Girisk-Qandahar
Multan	5 Nov.	*	37	Qandahar-Multan
Lahore	23 Nov.	*	*	*
Agra	22 Dec.	*	*	*
Total Time Taken : 158 days				

TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT

Caravan

The oldest and the most popular method of travelling in groups in medieval India was the caravan which provided maximum safety and security. Multan, Kabul and Lahore were the main meeting places of the caravans from west and central Asia.¹⁹ Manrique states that caravans from Persia, Khurasan and other countries generally returned in the company of the Mughal caravans.²⁰ From the dispersal point onward, the journey inside the country was probably also undertaken with other groups of travellers and caravans. Sometimes the traveller had to wait until a caravan arrived or until enough people gathered to form one. But as caravans were frequent, he would not have had a long wait before resuming his journey.²¹ The main body of a caravan usually consisted of traders with large supplies of various commodities. Other travellers-individuals, *faqirs*, *yogis* and sometimes pilgrims too-joined large caravans for protection and companionship.

The leader of a caravan, variously called as *Mir*, *Salar* or *Bakshi*, was a very important person, and like the captain of a ship, he had ultimate control of everything while the caravan was on the road. Probably he was employed by the merchants forming the caravan, and he normally took important decisions after full consultation with them.²²

As the caravans proceeded on their way, people with their baggage, pack animals, mounts and carts, joined or left the caravans at various points. When Peter Mundy left Surat for Agra in November 1630, there was only 150 people and 15 to 20 carts with some camels in the caravan. But soon the number rose to between 1,700 and 1,800 persons, and 250 and 300 carts, besides oxen and buffaloes.²³ Naturally, a competent leader was essential to control such a large number of men and animals. His influence and efficiency could be of considerable help to members of the caravan. He knew how to deal with the customs officials and occasionally was even able to evade the formalities of customs and *rahdari* by bringing his influence to bear on the collectors.²⁴ He was responsible for selecting halts, and for announcing the departure of the caravan.²⁵

Caravans usually travelled during the dry season. According to Peter Mundy, the last caravan of the season generally left Agra for Surat by the end of February. The caravan usually started the day's journey about 2 or 3 hours before dawn and halted for rest around noon.²⁶ In the morning drums were beaten to announce the departure of the caravan.

The members of the caravan had to guard themselves against attack from outside and betrayal from within. Although caravans were not completely immune from the depredations of bandits and robbers, their very size offered a measure of security. Yet, to ensure added

protection of the caravan, armed guards and securities were hired. A general description of a caravan and its defence is given by Ippolito Desideri. He describes the caravan or "cafila" as a "large body of people, armed all of them, who combined to travel together". He writes about his own experience which is worth quoting here:²⁷

Thus united in the morning, before daybreak, we began marching in good order like an army with trumpets, drums, standard officers, baggage carts, camels etc. We went along this style up to a convenient hour and finally encamped in some spacious place and always near some lake, river or ditch.... There in the open men spent the night in resting but always sentries on the watch.

However, it does not appear that all the travellers in a caravan were armed as Desideri would have us believe. Armed guards and sentries had to be hired to protect the caravan not only from robbers and thieves but also from wild animals when it halted in a hilly region or near a forest.²⁸

When William Hawkins, one of the early English travellers, started from Surat in the beginning of 1609, he hired 50 Pathans with the help of one of the officers of Khan Khanan. They escorted him safely to Dhaita where they were relieved by another group of 40 horsemen. At Burhanpur the guards were changed again.²⁹ Another English traveller, Edward Terry, undertook the journey from Surat to Mandu in 1617 with presents for emperor Jahangir. He was accompanied by 4 Englishmen and 20 Indians with 6 wagons. It was the practice of the party to halt on the outskirts of a large town or village where the wagons were arranged in a ring within which the tents were pitched. During the halt his men took turns at sentry duties. The journey was accomplished without any untoward incident.

Banjaras

In medieval India, the *banjaras* were perhaps the most travelled tribes. The term *banjara* was mainly applied to the itinerant grain, salt and cattle merchants who lived in tents and moved about with their livestock and carts. They visited even the most remote and inaccessible regions to forage for grain and other commodities to sell in more populous areas. They also accompanied bodies of troops to supply them with grain and other commodities. Comprised of both Hindus and Muslims, they claimed a common origin and affinity. Scattered all over India, they were divided into many branches and sub-branches. They owned bullocks, bullock-carts, cows, horses, camels and tents, and travelled in large parties, consisting mainly of family groups and other tribal members.³⁰

There is a general agreement among almost all contemporary observers that *banjaras* owned large number of cattle. As bullock was the main draught animal, the number of the

bullocks possessed indicated the extent of their prosperity and their comparative advantage over many other group of traders. On his journey to Patna in 1632, Peter Mundy met many *banjara* caravans. Near Rampur, not far from Allahabad, he saw one of them going to Agra with 14,000 oxen laden with grain. The members of the *banjara* caravan carried their household along with them.³¹ During Aurangzeb's reign, Tavernier saw a *banjara* caravan with 10 to 12 thousand oxen laden with all sorts of commodities, going from one end of the country to the other.³²

CARRIAGE AND TRANSPORT

The most common means of movement for men and goods alike was by oxen, bullock-carts and horses. The affluent class used *palkis*, elephants and horse carriages. As horses were expensive, only a few could afford to maintain and ride them. Elephants were more expensive and less used. Oxen which played the leading role in transport in medieval India pulled carts, carried packs and were ridden by travellers. Gujarati cows were known for their beauty and swiftness. It has been claimed that they could travel 120 miles in twenty hours.³³

The rentals for oxen, bullock-carts or coaches varied from place to place. In Sindh, a coach drawn by oxen could be hired for around 25 pence or Rs.2 for a day.³⁴ Carts which carried goods and merchandise had different rates. For Patna to Agra, the charge for a cart was Rs.1.5 per *maund* carried.³⁵ On difficult routes and in bad seasons, when it was difficult to use carts, oxen were used as pack animals. Then the charges were probably higher. Camels were also used to carry goods and to draw carts. They had to be used in desert areas. Fast she-camels were used for sending messages. But the use of camels was not popular on all routes. They were in good demand, however, on several routes, *e.g.*, from Agra to Surat, and in Sind and Beluchistan.

CONCLUSION

From the above analysis it can be rightly concluded that the roads and the communication system were highly developed, even perhaps by any contemporary standard, in medieval India. For reasons of imperial defence and conquest on the one hand, and for trade on the other, the Sultans of Delhi as also the Mughal emperors took special care to maintain and develop the network of roads. The Mughals especially gave particular attention to the building up a strong communication system. The growth and development of both internal and external trade during the Mughal rule can be considered as an ample illustration of the above fact. Again, the extensive trade that the Mughal India had with various regions of central and west Asia will indicate that overland routes and traffic from those regions to India were very active throughout the period.

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TRADE AND NAVIGATION BETWEEN INDIA AND THE MALDIVES IN THE FIFTEENTH AND SIXTEENTH CENTURIES

JOHN VILLIERS

ALTHOUGH the existence of an archipelago made up of thousands of very small islands situated in an area to the west of the Malabar coast of India and corresponding roughly to the Maldiv Islands and their northern neighbours, the Laccadives was known to the author of the *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea* in the first century AD, to Ptolemy in the second, to the Chinese Fah Hian in the fifth, and to the Arab Suleiman in the ninth, the earliest reliable account that we have of the islands is that of Ibn Batuta, who travelled to the Maldives from Calicut in the 1340 s.¹ Ibn-Batuta's account reveals clearly that at that time, the Maldiv Islands were an important and longestablished centre of maritime trade in the Indian Ocean region, frequented by merchants of many nations. He says that the principal exports of the islands, then as later, were coconuts and coir, cotton and silk cloth, including cotton turbans, copper pots and cowry shells. In return for these goods the islanders had to import many of the necessities of life, including rice, salt, areca, raw cotton and silk, porcelain and earthenware, iron and steel, and gold and silver. Not only did merchants sail from all over the Indian Ocean to the Maldiv Islands to do business, but the islanders themselves played an active part in the trade. Ibn Batuta tells us that the Maldivians conducted regular trade in these commodities with the Arabs at Aden. We know from the writings of Abd-er-Razzak that there were merchants from "the islands of Diwa Mahal" in Ormuz in the mid-fifteenth century.² They frequented most of the major ports in the western part of the Indian Ocean, including Cambay, Calicut and other centres on the west coast of India, and there appear also to have been well-established trading relations between the Maldives and Persia, from where the islanders derived their silver coinage, the *larin*, and very probably their Muslim religion as well. Tome Pires, in his *Suma Oriental* of about 1515, mentions Maldivians among the merchants of many nations trading in Malacca.³ So, when the Portuguese first appeared in the Indian Ocean in the closing years of the fifteenth century, they found in the Maldives an important link in the traditional network of maritime commerce in the region, as well as a source of several valuable commodities in which they were anxious to trade.

The coconut palm and its numerous products supplied the Maldiv Islanders not only with many of their domestic needs but also numerous commodities for which there was a great demand throughout the Indian Ocean and beyond, and on the export of which the Maldivian economy largely depended. As the Florentine traveller, Francesco Carletti, who was in India in the last years of the sixteenth century, wrote:

There are many of these [coconut palms] on Goa's island, and they make it cool and

delightful there. But there are, beyond any comparison, more of them on the uncounted islets of the Maldives, all of which are located to the south of Goa On these islets, the Indian natives live by means of, dress from, and take all their needs from those trees, from which they make their houses and their boats. And each year they come to Goa with loads of merchandise made entirely from those palms - that is, wines, which they.... extract from the pit inside the nuts; vinegar, from the substance from which the wine also is made; cording, which they make from the husk that covers the said nut, it being a stupose thing and being prepared as hemp is made ready. And they make cables and ropes and rigging for servicing their ships, they being stronger and more resistance to rot the longer they remain in the water. And they also make mats, and from the leaves of the palms the sails for their vessels as well as covering for their houses. They also bring many of the fruits - that is, *cocos* or nuts - still green, with their pith inside, which is white.

And these nuts have their own milk, which is removed by breaking open the nuts, crushing them, and squeezing them, and which is good for cooking rice, and is excellent and of great substance and nourishment. They also eat the aforesaid pith, from which they also make bread and various other things From this plant, finally, not having any other, they extract all that they need for living in the way to which those people are used to live in this world, having no thought for any other delicacies.⁴

The learned Garcia da Orta's discourse on the coconut palm in his *Coloquios dos simples e drogas da India*, published in Goa in 1563, also contains a wealth of information about methods of production of the wood, the fruit and their derivatives in the Maldives:

The wood, although it is not very good, is useful for many things, because the trees are so tall. In the Maldive Islands they make their boats entirely from palm wood, even the pegs, the sails and the rigging, and they cover the houses and their boats with the branches that we call *olla* in Malabar. They grow two kinds of palm tree, one for the fruit, and the other to make *cura*, which is young wine and which, when it is boiled, they call *orraqua* [arrack]. From the trees that give *cura*, if they need them for this purpose, they cut off some of the ends and tie them to jars into which they drain the *cura*. They climb up to take it from the tops of the trees with ropes tied to their feet or by means of notches cut in the trunk of the tree. They distil the *cura* in the same way as brandy, and the wine they produce from it is like brandy. A piece of cloth dipped in it will burn, as it will in brandy. This fine wine they call *fula*, which means flower, while what remains they call *orraqua*, and they mix a small quantity of it with the other. They make vinegar from the *cura* before it is distilled by placing it in the sun to make it turn sour, and this vinegar is sometimes very strong. After taking off the jar of *cura*, if it yields much, they take another, from which they make sugar, which is thickened by being burned or placed in the sun and is called *jagra* [jaggery]. The best *jagra* of all is from the

Maldivian Islands, and it is not so black as that from other countries.⁵

Orta goes on to say that copra, which was used by the Arabs as a flavouring for sauces and soups, was also made from the dried flesh of the coconut and exported to Ormuz and Balagate and to other places "which do not have much of this fruit, or where it is altogether lacking". The oil extracted from fresh coconuts was considered to be an excellent laxative, while the oil made from copra was a good medicine for the nerves, for convulsions and pains in the joints and a sovereign remedy for wind.⁶

Orta then describes the so-called 'Maldivian coconuts'. These were widely believed to have originally grown on the roots or trunks of certain palm trees at a time when the Maldivian Islands still formed part of the mainland of India and, when the trees became very old, to have dropped off and become buried in the earth. When the islands were flooded by the sea, these coconuts remained buried under the water and from time to time in stormy weather would float to the surface, usually joined together in pairs, and the islanders would collect them. In fact, these Maldivian coconuts were sea coconuts or *cocos de mer* (*Lodoicea seychellarum*), a species found only in the Seychelles, where the fruit growing on trees close to the seashore sometimes float across the Indian Ocean and are picked up in Maldivian waters. This was how the mistaken belief arose that in some mysterious way they grew in the Maldives. The islanders liked to eat the sweet juice of these coconuts as an accompaniment to fish and rice, and the flesh was thought to provide a good antidote against poison and 'malignant fevers', and a cure for a wide variety of ailments, including colic, paralysis and epilepsy. The shell was often made into goblets set in gold, silver and precious stones. According to Orta, the queen of Portugal ordered a quantity of the nuts to be sent to her every year, and the Emperor Rudolf II is said to have offered 4,000 florins for a single nut.⁷

Carletti tells us that Maldivian coconuts were so greatly esteemed by the islanders that the king would not allow any to be taken out of the country, and consequently they were hard to come by in India.⁸ Orta maintains that any person who, finding one on the seashore in the Maldives, did not immediately take it to the king was punished by death.⁹ Carletti, however, managed to acquire six ounces of the fruit in Goa and found it "of good effect". Instead of crushing it, he removed fragments of it by rubbing it on a stone with a little water "in the Indian way".¹⁰ Father Andre Fernandes, writing from Cochin in January 1563, says that the flesh of a Maldivian coconut fetched from fifty to a hundred cruzados there, while the shells, which were used to make spoons and drinking cups, sold for about the same price.¹¹ Alessandro Valignano, writing in the 1550s, also states that a coconut shell cost forty to fifty cruzados and that the flesh was worth its weight in silver, it being "much sought after throughout India".¹²

Coir, however, was much the most important of all the products derived from the coconut

palm or its fruit. Orta describes its properties and its economic importance for the Maldives as follows:

The coconut has two large shells covering the flesh and , when it is ripe, in order to eat the flesh the outer shell should be scraped, as we are told by Avicena and Serapiam. The first of the shells is very furry and from it is made coir, which we and the people of Malabar call *cairo* and which is used for making cordage and rigging for all their ships. It is much used in this country because it is very choice cordage and does not rot in salt water, and that is why the fur from coconut shells from which coir is made is so good. All the ships are caulked with it, so that it can be used like hemp and oakum and matweed as well. That is why it is such a valuable commodity for the Portuguese, even though it is produced in such great quantities, and that is why so much of it is used, so that there is always a shortage, in spite of there being so many palm trees in India, and the king is paid so much tribute in coir from the Maldivian Islands. Certainly they set great store by it for caulking ships, because it swells when soaked in salt water.¹³

Francois Pyrard, who lived in captivity in the Maldives from 1602 to 1607, but nevertheless "possessed a great number of trees, and those of the very best, and myself produced all those commodites which I have described" gives a lengthy list of all the useful by-products of the coconut palm, many of which are still made by the islanders today. Charcoal, which was used by the Maldivian goldsmiths and silversmiths, was obtained by burning the shell after it had been stripped of its covering of coir. Black dye was obtained by mixing this charcoal with coconut oil, and ink by mixing it with water. The stalks of the nuts were made into paint brushes. The branches were split in two and made into laths for roofing and for fences. The green leaves were used instead of paper and the dried leaves were woven into mats. From the stems of the leaves brooms, the shafts of javelins and other weapons, needles and plaited boxes were fashioned. The gauze-like substance at the base of the palm fronds was used to make sacks and for straining liquids. The trunks of the trees were hollowed out, covered with the skin of a ray and used as drums.¹⁴

The Munich Codex of 1510, a description of the Maldives by Valentim Fernandes, says that twelve to fifteen ships laden with coir sailed to Calicut and Cambay every year,¹⁵ while Pyrard, writing a century later, states that more than a hundred ships were sent each year, laden with coconuts, coconut oil and 'honey' (palm sugar), and palm leaves, to the "coasts of Arabia and Malabar and throughout India".¹⁶ Pyrard does not make it clear whether he includes the coir from the coconuts in this cargo, but, if so, it would suggest a substantial growth in the export of coir from the Maldives to India during the sixteenth century, no doubt partly as a result of the increased demand for cordage from the Portuguese in India after they began building their ships at Cochin and other Indian shipyards.¹⁷ As early as 1552, Father Baltasar Gago, writing probably from Cochin, asserted that it would be impossible for the Portuguese to continue to maintain themselves in India (i.e. the Estado da India) without retaining control of the Maldives, because of their need for regular and substantial supplies of the coir which the islands produced.¹⁸

Duarte Barbosa, writing in 1516, informs us that the Maldivians themselves were skilled shipwrights and built excellent ocean-going vessels called *gundras* entirely of palm-wood and coir. He writes:

In the islands of Maldio they build many large vessels from palm trees, sewn with matweed, for they have no other wood, and in these they sail to the mainland. These boats have keels and are of large burthen. They also build other, smaller, oared boats like brigantines or pinnaces, and these are the most beautiful boats in the world, very well made and extremely light. They use them to sail from one island to another and also for the crossing to Malabar.¹⁹

Pyrard describes how he often saw in the Maldives "an infinite number of ships of 100 or 120 tons built entirely of this timber, without any iron or other wood or material except what this tree produces. The anchors are even made of it, and are very excellent and handy The planks are fastened with pins, and lashed and seamed within with cordage made of the fruit." He says that these vessels, even when used for long voyages to the Malabar coast, to Cambay or as far as Arabia or Sumatra would last four or five years.²⁰

Gaspar Correia, in his account of Vicente Sodre's expedition to Calicut in 1503 gives a detailed description of these *gundras* and of their cargoes:

Gundras are made from the wood of palm trees joined together and attached by wooden pegs and without any nails, and their sails are of matting made of dried palm leaves. These craft come laden with coir and with cowries.... These *gundras* also carry dried fish, called *moxama*, which are the backs of fine fish dried in the sun, since there is no salt in the islands, and the fish are made so dry that they cannot putrify. There are so many of these fish in the islands that ships sail entirely laden with them and they constitute the mariners' main food and are supplied to all the sailors when they are serving at sea. The ships also bring many pieces of coloured silk and white cloth of many different kinds and forms and much cloth of gold and braid. These are all made by the islanders from the silk and gold and cotton thread they get from the many ships that pass through the islands on their way from the coast of Bengal to the Straits of Mecca and that buy these textiles in exchange for the raw materials from which they are made. Because the islands are an important port of call on routes in every direction, Indian Muslims go there to buy cloths in exchange for salt and cooking-pots, which the islands lack, and also take rice and silver there.²¹

Second only to coir in importance for the Maldivian economy were cowry shells. Ibn Batuta mentions the export of cowries from the Maldives in exchange for Indian rice. He also tells us that they were sold to the Yemenis, who used them instead of sand as ballast in their ships, and that they circulated as currency in the Sudan at the rate of 1,150 to the dinar.²² We learn from the *Suma Oriental* of Tome Pires that in the early sixteenth century cowries

were exported from the Maldivé Islands in very large quantities for use as currency in Orissa and "all the kingdoms of Bengal", and as far afield as Arakan and Martaban, at that time subject to Pegu.²³ Both Barbosa and Fernao Lopes de Castanheda believed that cowries were specially popular in northern India as currency because they were cleaner than the copper coins that had formerly been in use in that region and were said to dirty the hands, but it seems more likely that it was simply a shortage of precious metals in Bengal in the sixteenth century that brought about an increase in the use of cowries as specie there.²⁴ In the mid-sixteenth century, according to the *Lyvro dos Pesos da Yndia* of Antonio Nunes, published in 1554, 3840 cowries could be purchased in Bengal with one *larin*, the *larin* being then worth a little over fifty thousand Portuguese *reis*.²⁵ In the seventeenth century this situation was reversed when Bengal became almost the sole supplier of raw silk and high quality textiles to the European Companies, who paid the Bengalis in silver, of which they had a plentiful supply as a result of the immense quantities of American silver then coming to Spain and to the Philippines. This in turn led to the rapid monetization of the Bengali economy.²⁶

Alexander Hamilton, writing in the early eighteenth century, gives a good description of the way in which the cowries were harvested:

They are caught by putting Branches of Coconut Trees with their Leaves on, into the Sea and, in five or six Months the little Shell-fish stick to those Leaves in Clusters, which they take off, and digging pits in the Sand, put them in, and cover them up, and leave them two or three years in the Pit, that the Fish may putrify, and then they take them out of the Pit and barter them for Rice, Butter and Cloth, which Shipping bring from Ballasore in Orissa near Bengal, in which countries Cowries pass for Money from 2500 to 3000 for a Rupee, or half a Crown English.²⁷

Hamilton's account shows that in the early eighteenth century the demand for cowries in India was still considerable. This was largely because the Dutch East India Company, during the period that they controlled the Maldives as a result of their domination of Ceylon, shipped enormous quantities through Ceylon and Bengal to Amsterdam and other ports in the Low Countries, where they were bought, chiefly by English traders, for the purchase of African slaves. By the middle of the eighteenth century Maldivian cowries had become not only a generally accepted alternative to gold and silver as specie on the Guinea coast, but, made into necklaces and bracelets, also a highly prized article of adornment among the African population.

Undoubtedly the most highly prized of all the products of the Maldivé Islands was ambergris, the waxy substance secreted in the intestines of the sperm-whale, which Camoes described as a "precious paste with the most wonderful fragrance known to the world",²⁸ and which, according to Orta, was believed by the Chinese, who imported it in large quantities, to be highly "efficacious for intercourse with women and beneficial for the heart, the brain

and the stomach".²⁹ One of the earliest references in a European source to the collection of ambergris in the Indian Ocean is to be found in Marco Polo's account of Madagascar, of which he says "they have plenty of ambergris, because whales abound in these seas, and also cachalots. And since they catch great numbers of both, they are never short of ambergris; for you must know it is the whale that produces ambergris."³⁰

Later writers were less sure of how ambergris was produced. Garcia da Orta tells us that some people believed it was made of the semen of whales, others that it was the excrement or the saliva of an unspecified sea beast, others again that it came from a spring at the bottom of the sea. Orta himself seems to have leaned towards the theory that it grew like a fungus on the seabed and was brought up to the surface and cast ashore by storms. In support of this theory, he points out that, whenever there was a strong east wind blowing in the Indian Ocean, the ambergris would be driven westwards from the Maldiv Islands and washed ashore at Sofala, in the Comoros archipelago and along the coast of Mozambique, whereas, when the wind blew from the west, more ambergris would be found in the Maldives themselves.³¹

Castanheda asserts that ambergris in the Maldives was "more plentiful and of better quality than anywhere else". He says the islanders believed that ambergris consisted of the droppings of a certain large sea bird called *anacangripasqui*, which fed on fragrant herbs that grew on the larger islands. He goes on to say that there were three qualities of ambergris. In the Maldives the finest was called *ponahambar*, which meant golden amber and was the most valuable because it was only found in small quantities and was very difficult to collect. The second grade of ambergris was greyer in colour and called *cuambar* or water amber because it had been in the water for a long time and had consequently lost much of its purity and quality. The lowest grade was known as *manimbar*, meaning fish amber, because it was ambergris that had been eaten by whales or other very large fish and then regurgitated, turning black and losing almost all its valuable properties in the process.³²

Some very large pieces were recorded. Gasper Correia describes a piece set in silver that was presented by the king of Melinde to Vasco da Gama to give to the Portuguese royal family as being half a *covado* (three quarters of a yard) in length and with the girth of a man round its middle.³³ Pedro Teixeira in his *Relaciones* writes of a piece washed ashore on the coast of Zanzibar as so large that it obscured from view a camel placed behind it.³⁴ Garcia de Orta tells us of pieces weighing as much as 225 *arrateis*, and of a piece found near Cape Comorin in 1555 which weighed almost thirty *quintais* and which, because the person who found it thought it was only a lump of tar, was sold very cheap, only regaining its true value after it had been divided up into many smaller pieces.³⁵

There were wide variations in the value of ambergris of different qualities in different markets. The *Lyvro dos Pesos da Yndia* of 1554, says that at Ormuz ambergris was sold by

the *matical* or *mitical*, which varied in value from a maximum of 2 *azares* down to 16 *cadis*.³⁶ In the Maldives, where Valentim Fernandes tells us all ambergris had to be taken at once to the king on pain of death, one ounce was worth one ducat and one *mitical* eighty Portuguese *reis*.³⁷ Orta tells us that Portuguese traders sold ambergris to the Chinese for as much as 1500 cruzados for one catty (20 ounces).³⁸ Pieces of ambergris were frequently mounted in gold or silver for presentation as gifts from one ruler to another.

A less exotic but scarcely less renowned commodity produced in the Maldivian Islands, both for domestic consumption and for export, was dried fish. This was of two kinds, *moxama* (bonito-fish or striped tunny) and *camelmas* (squid). Squid were extremely abundant in Maldivian waters. According to Valentim Fernandes, the following method was used to catch them. First, great quantities of small fry to be used as bait would be caught in large nets cast from boats into the shallow waters just off the islands. The fishermen would then take their boats two or three leagues out to sea and throw the small fry into the water in those places where they knew the squid congregated. "Immediately, so great a multitude of squid comes that they only need to throw in the hooks, without attaching anything to them. They go on taking as many fish as they can and in this way five or six men can fill a boat." Sometimes, Fernandes goes on, there would be such a profusion of squid that the fishermen would need no bait at all and would simply bail water out of the boats in ladles. At the mere sound of the bailing, the fish would come flocking round and take the hooks. The squid were then cut into slices or in half and well boiled in a mixture of fresh and salt water, before being put in a long wooden tube over a low fire and left to be slowly cured by the smoke.³⁹

Maldivian dried fish was eaten all over the Indian Ocean, both on land and at sea, and was usually supplied on the Portuguese East Indiamen. Cananor and Calicut seem to have been the chief markets in southern India. Valentim Fernandes tells us that it was shipped as far as Sumatra and Malacca.⁴⁰

The waters around the Maldivian Islands also abounded in turtles and the islanders exported a substantial quantity of tortoise-shell. Edrisi, writing in the twelfth century, maintains that tortoise-shell was the principal product of the islands, where it was known as *zabl*.⁴¹ Each shell was divided into seven pieces and then fashioned into combs and women's ornaments. Barbosa informs us that Maldivian tortoise-shell was known locally as *alcama* and was cut into very small thin pieces.⁴² Both Barbosa and Castanheda say it was especially esteemed in Gujarat, where Pyrard tells us it was made into women's bracelets and boxes and caskets set in silver.⁴³

The cotton and silk cloth, most of it coloured and some of it braided with gold and silver thread, that was woven in the Maldives, both for domestic consumption and for export, was of very high quality. The raw cotton was imported from Cambay, chiefly in exchange for dried fish, and both cotton and silk were brought from Bengal in exchange for cowries. The

Portuguese presence seems to have had little effect on this trade, even after they had acquired a measure of control over the export of the raw materials as a result of the establishment of their factories and fortresses in India.⁴⁴

As we have seen, rice was not grown in the Maldives but, no doubt for this very reason, was considered, as in the islands of eastern Indonesia, where also it was not grown, to indicate high social status and so had to be imported from Bengal and elsewhere in India, along with many of the other necessities of life.⁴⁵

Navigation among the islands was difficult and dangerous. Valentim Fernandes observes that the islands were so low-lying, many of them being below sea level, that, if it had not been for the tall palm trees growing on them, they would have been virtually invisible and many ships would have been lost.⁴⁶ Ibn Batuta had pointed out in the fourteenth century that, if a ship missed her way in these waters, she would fail to reach the islands and be carried by the wind to the Coromandel coast or to Ceylon,⁴⁷ and this is precisely what happened to D. Lourenco de Almeida, son of D. Francisco de Almeida, first governor and viceroy of Portuguese India, a century and a half later. Castanheda relates how in 1506 D. Lourenco, with some other captains, was sent by his father from Goa to the Maldives to find out the position in the islands and to intercept and capture any ships he might sight on their way from Pegu, Siam and Bengal to Mecca. As his pilots were unfamiliar with those Latitudes and did not know how to avoid the strong and treacherous currents there, D. Lourenco and his fleet lost their way and sailed on, missing the Maldives altogether, until they sighted Cape Comorin and thence by accident circumnavigated Ceylon and established the first Portuguese contacts with that island.⁴⁸ An early sixteenth century *roteiro* in Spanish advises ships' captains who find themselves approaching Maldivian waters by mistake, either for lack of wind or through bad steersmanship or because of the strong currents, to send a skiff ashore to fetch a native pilot, so that he can guide the ship into one of the navigable channels between the islands, and, until the pilot comes on board, to stand the ship off at some distance from the shore.⁴⁹

Pyrard says that four of the channels or *kadu* between the islands were navigable for large vessels. The northern most of these was the channel now called the Moresby Channel; to the south lay two channels in the centre of the Archipelago, the Karahidu and the Ariyadu, and further south again was the One-and-a-half Degree Channel, north of Suvadiva Atoll. The widest of these channels is the last and this was no doubt the reason for its being the most generally used, though there was another easily navigable channel, the Equatorial Channel, between Suvadiva and Gan Island, which large ships use regularly to this day.⁵⁰ In the north of the Maldives navigation was much more difficult than in the south, because the islands and atolls are much closer together, in some cases so close that, in Barros' words, it was possible "to leap from one to another without wetting the feet, or swing across to one by means of the branches of a tree growing on another."⁵¹

Barbosa at the beginning of the sixteenth century writes of Muslim ships, many of them richly laden, arriving in the Maldives, undaunted by these navigational hazards, from China, the Moluccas, Malacca, Sumatra, Bengal, Ceylon and Pegu, taking on water and supplies as well as cargo and then sailing westwards to the Red Sea ports. However, he adds that sometimes they would arrive in such a bad state that they would have to be unloaded and left to sink.⁵² Pyrard at the beginning of the seventeenth century mentions merchants from all the ports of the Malabar coast, Gujaratis from Cambay, Surat and Chaul, Arabs, Persians, Bengalis, and traders from Sao Tome and Masulipatam, Ceylon and Sumatra coming to the Maldives.⁵³

The Portuguese, though they temporarily disturbed Indian Ocean trade by attempting to gain a dominant share in it through the capture of certain key points in the network, such as Ormuz, Aden, the ports of the Malabar coast, the Maldiv Islands and Malacca, did not permanently disrupt it and, at least in the case of coir, may even have helped to expand it. They did not have sufficient resources of men or ships even to police, let alone dominate so vast a maritime region as the Indian Ocean. The complex traditional patterns of trade were too firmly established and brought too many rich rewards, in the Maldiv Islands as elsewhere, for the numerous powerful rulers in the region to stand aside and let the Portuguese establish a monopoly. The intermittent Portuguese presence in the Maldives between 1503 and 1650, sometimes as conquerors, sometimes as overlords and sometimes only as trading partners or rivals, seems to have had little effect on the commercial life of the Maldivians and, so far from destroying their ancient economic and political ties with the indigenous rulers on the coasts of India, appears on the contrary to have strengthened them.

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25. Rodrigo Jose de Lima Felner, *Subsidios para a Historia da India Portuguesa* (Lisbon, 1868) p. 37.
26. See Om Prakash, 'European Trade and the Economy of Bengal in the Seventeenth and the Early Eighteenth Century' ed. J. van Goor, *Trading Companies in Asia 1600-1830* (Utrecht, 1986) pp. 19-31.
27. Alexander Hamilton, *A New Account of the East Indies*, 2, vols. (London: Argonaut Press, 1930), vol. 1, pp. 192-93.
28. Luis de Camoes, *Os Lusíadas*, X, 137:
Outras ilhas no mar tambem sujeito
A vos na costa de Africa erenosa;
Onde sahe do cheiro mais perfeito
A massa, ao mundo occulta, e preciosa.
29. Orta, *Coloquios*, vol. 1, p. 52.
30. *The Travels of Marco Polo*, trans. and ed. Ronald Latham (London: Folio Society, 1968) pp. 255-56.
31. Orta, *Coloquios*, vol. 1, p. 46.
32. Castanheda, *Historia*, liv. 4, ch. xxxv, p. 438. *Ponahambar* (Barbosa has *ponambar*) is evidently a compound word made up of Arabic 'anbar (ambergris) and Malayalam *pon* (gold), while *minambar* is 'anbar preceded by Malayalam *min* (fish). The meaning of *cuambar* (Barbosa has *pumbar*) is not known.
33. Correia, *Lendas*, vol. 1, p. 132.
34. Orta, *Coloquios*, vol. 1, p. 57, n. 7.

35. *Ibid*, p. 49.
36. Felner, *Subsidios*, p. 13. The *mitical*, *metical* or *matical* was originally an Arabic gold weight equal to 4.41 grams and a gold coin worth 420 *reis*. In Chaul in 1528 four chickens cost 60 *reis* or one *tanga*, and small he-goat the same. In Travancore in 1548 three large chickens cost only 25 *reis*, while during the siege of Diu in 1538 the price of a single chicken rose to 600 *reis*. In 1557 the average monthly salary of a sailor on a Portuguese galley at a *fortaleza* on the Indian coast was a mere 300 *reis*.
37. Fitzler, 'Die Maldiven', p. 254.
38. Hamilton relates how he saw a piece of ambergris belonging to Adda Rajah, the ruler of Cananor and the Laccadives, "as big as a Bushel and he valued it at 10000 Rupees, or 1250 L. Sterl.". (*A New Account*, vol. 1, p. 166).
39. Fitzler, 'Die Maldiven', p. 252-53.
40. *Ibid*, p. 253.
41. Pyard, *Voyage*, vol. 2, p. 432.
42. Barbosa, *Livro*, p. 175.
43. Pyard, *Voyage*, vol. 1, p. 240-41.
44. See Roderich Ptak, 'China, Portugal und der Maledivenhandel von fruhen 15. bis zum fruhen 16. Jahrhundert: Einige Bemerkungen zur Wirtschaftsgeschichte Sudasiens', ed. Roderich Ptak, *Portuguese Asia; Aspects in History and Economic History (Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries)* (Stuttgart, 1987) pp. 133-35.
45. See John Villiers 'The Cash Crop Economy and State Formation in the Spice Islands in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries' ed. J. Kathirithamby-Wells and John Villiers, *The Southeast Asian Port and Polity: Rise and Demise* (University of Singapore Press, 1990) pp. 87-89, 94.
46. Fitzler, 'Die Maldiven', p.250.
47. Pyard, *Voyage*, vol. 2, p. 437.
48. Castanheda, *Historia*, liv. 2, ch. xxii, p. 258.
49. See A. Fontoura da Costa, *Roteiros portugueses ineditos da Carreira da India do seculo XVI* (Lisbon, 1940) p. 162.
50. Pyard, *Voyage*, vol. 1, p. 99. On the navigable channels in the Maldives see also Comandante Humberto Leitao, *Viagens do Reino para a India da India para o Reino (1608-1612). Diarios de Navegacao Coligidos por D. Antonio de Ataide no seculo XVII*, 3 vols (Lisbon, 1958) vol. 3, p. 69.
51. Joao de Barros, *Asia. Terceira Decada*.
52. Barbosa, *Livro*, p. 176.
53. Pyard, *Voyage*, vol. 1, p. 236. Mamale, the leading Muslim merchant in Cananor in the early sixteenth century, who enjoyed a virtual monopoly over the Maldives trade and was known as 'Lord of the Maldiv Islands' and 'Regent of the Sea', had a contract with the king of the Maldives whereby for an agreed price he supplied rice, salt and cooking pots to the islands in exchange for coir, dried fish, cowries and fine silk cloth. The exchange of these commodities may be considered as typifying Maldivian trade with India at that time. See Genevieve Bouchon, 'Regent of the Sea'. *Cannanore's Response to Portuguese Expansion, 1507-1528* (Oxford university Press, 1988).

SOME ASIAN WANDERERS IN SEVENTEENTH CENTURY INDIA—AN EXAMINATION OF SOURCES IN PERSIAN

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FOR our knowledge of conditions of travel in sixteenth and seventeenth century India, we remain largely dependant on the narratives of Europeans who in this period began to arrive in South Asia in considerable numbers. Many of these Europeans came accompanying missions or embassies; or were travellers in a great entourage, like the physician Bernier accompanying Danishmand Khan upon the peregrination of the Mughal court, or the jeweller Tavernier, who was possibly the greatest international trader in precious stones of his period, numbering the Mughal emperor and the Roi Soleil Louis XIV among his clients. At a more modest level we can take the example of Peter Mundy, travelling in upper India on the business of the English East India Company in 1633. At one stage of the journey he mentions that his party had hired eight horsemen and 115 footmen to accompany them.¹

Those who accompanied the imperial army, or were part of embassies or what we may describe as trade-missions, do not describe ordinary conditions of middle-class or lower-class travel along the highways and internal land and water routes of India. Evidence of these is furnished by humbler individual travellers of limited financial resources, the Venetian Caesar Frederick, or the Elizabethan and Jacobean English travellers whose narratives were first published by Hakluyt and Purchas. An example of the poor wanderer on foot who reached India is Thomas Coryat. The fact that he had been robbed by no means of a large store of money by a Turkish *sipahi* at Diarbekir, it did not prevent him continuing his travels eastward. He took ten months to make his way from Aleppo to the Mughal court, at expenditure of three pounds sterling, of which he had been cozened of ten shillings by "certain lewd Christians of the Armenian nation."² At a scarcely higher level as a traveller is the Armenian merchant Hovhannes, whose notebooks have recently been edited, travelling by cart from Surat to Awrangabad in 1684, with 8 pieces of London cloth purchased in Isfahan, and buying in Awrangabad a horse, a pair of slippers and several other items.³ Of many European travellers who left accounts of the western Indian coast we have a notable description of travelling by bullock-cart to Surat by the intellectual Jesuit Manuel Godinho in 1664. The reverend father, according to his own account, spent the time of his journey on top of the cart arguing amicably on religious topics with a Persian Shi'a and a Brahman.⁴

Factual descriptions of conditions of travel in Indian languages of this period appear to be rare. Some useful information on road travel can be gleaned from the autobiographical *Ardhakathanaka* of Banarasi Das Jain, written in somewhat pedestrian Hindi verse in A.D. 1641. Banarasi Das has vivid descriptions of his journeys from Jawnpur to Fatehpur and to

Agra. On one journey he hired two palankeens and four bearers and set out with his family.⁵ On another he set out on a cart, carrying jewels about his person, and luggage of twenty maunds of *ghee*, two leather containers of vegetable oil and some Jawnpur cloth, in all worth two hundred rupees. Five *kros* along the road, at Etawah they were drenched with rain. When Banarasi Das reached Agra at the end of the muddy road, he had to leave his cloth and oil on the other side of the river.⁶

The third separate class of descriptive narratives which yields information on conditions of travel in sixteenth and seventeenth century India, is in the languages of the Muslim world, Arabic, Persian and Turkish. In this body of literature there is no single work so valuable for our purpose as the Arab Ibn Battuta's fourteenth century account of his travels, notwithstanding his occasional muddles of chronology, and confusions and ambiguities about routes actually travelled. In the Mughal period there is no published Arabic account of travels in India of which I am aware, and the earlier tradition of the Arab geographers appears to have been lost. The scanty indications of conditions of travel in the mid-sixteenth century narrative of the Ottoman Turkish admiral Sidi 'Ali Reys, show that he, like so many others of our informants, travelled as a grandee. He left the court of the Sultan of Gujarat furnished with a beautiful horse, a team of camels, a large and a small tent and an escort of 250 mounted camel drivers from Sind.⁷

It is no exaggeration to say that Persian is as much a language of Mughal India as of Safavid Iran, just as it was also the language of culture of Muslim Central Asia. Descriptions of travels in India written in Persian outside the sub-continent are rare. Perhaps the most notable Safavid narrative of travel is the account of the embassy to Siam despatched in A.D. 1685. Only a few pages are concerned with India, and these describe the landing of the party at Madras and their entertainment by factors of the English East India Company there.⁸ More important and interesting for our purposes is an account by a royal librarian in Balkh of some years that he spent wandering in India; we shall return to this account later. Among writers in Persian resident in India by far the most valuable and detailed narrative of travel of the period is that of Asad Beg Qazwini, who was sent upon two missions to the Deccan by the emperor Akbar in the last years of his reign; but Asad Beg, like the Turkish admiral and so many of the Europeans, was a grandee, travelling in a large mounted and armed party.⁹

Of those who did not travel in such state, the traces remain in *tadhkiras* or biographical collections. In the main these fall into two groups, one concerned with Sufis, and the other concerned with poets. Examples from the former class survive from the fourteenth century Delhi Sultanate, together with examples of a related class of literature, the *Malfuzat* that records the conversations of Sufi *Pirs*. The contents are largely anecdotal, and hence occasionally shed light on actual conditions of travel as well as itineraries. Thus an anecdote in one of the earlier collections about temptation felt by a Sufi *Murid* when sitting next to a lady of easy virtue, makes it clear that in the late thirteenth century wheeled carriages plied on the route between Delhi and the town of Ajodhan in the Panjab and it was possible for an individual traveller

to take a place on one of these.¹⁰ In some *tadhkiras* the geographical allusions are such that one can only regret that no genuine *Safar-nama* or travel book of an itinerant Indian Sufi survives from the pre-Mughal period.¹¹ To give an example, the sixteenth century Sufi biographer Shaykh Jamali Kamboh, whose gemlike tomb is at Mehrauli on the southern outskirts of New Delhi, refers to his own travels to Herat, Iran and Adharbaijan, the Yemen and north Africa, and to his having seen the footprint of Adam in Ceylon.¹² Would that he had written more about these journeys! The Sufi, biographical literature of the Mughal period includes one rich source of information regarding fairly humble individual travellers in South Asia, the *Malfuzat-i Naqshbandiyya* of Shah Mahmud of Awrangabad. We shall draw upon its information later in this paper.

In Mughal times the other type of biographical collection that we have mentioned, the *tadhkira* of Persian poets, becomes common. Many examples of this genre produced in India during the period from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, as well as some compiled in Iran,¹³ are largely or mainly concerned with near-contemporaries of the compilers. A large number of the poets whose biographies are given had migrated from Iran, where the Safavid court was inimical and ungenerous towards them, to India where there was generous patronage of this cultural activity. Such patronage was extended from the Mughal emperor and royal princes, from the Sultans of the Deccan, from administrative officers and officials, down to the modest level of Persianized society [cf. the description of poets patronised by a *Pir* on the march, quoted on page 15 below]. The poets, who sometimes had alternative skills, when they had arrived in India seldom stayed put at one place. They tended to migrate from one Indian city or courtly centre to another, wherever patronage and congenial company could be found. They had an understandable preference for agreeable surroundings; for example, an unusually high number settled and died in Kashmir.¹⁴ The compilers of the *tadhkiras*, often writers of Persian verses, came from the same literate stratum of Mughal society and were equally migratory in their movements, either from choice or from the postings of their employment in the governmental machine. They often record when and where they met the subjects of their notices.

The poetical *tadhkiras* are less rich than some Sufi *tadhkiras* in circumstantial anecdotal detail of incidents of travel. Nevertheless *in toto* they yield some thousand of itineraries of individuals in India in the late sixteenth, seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. A sample, taken at random, may serve to indicate the quality and limitations of the information on this topic which they contain.

The *Maykhana* of 'Abd al-Nabi Qazwini [Storey No. 1115] is a *tadhkira* of poets, "mostly contemporaries of the compiler," begun at Ajmer in 1613 or 1614 and was more or less completed at Patna five years later.¹⁵ If we open the modern Persian edition at random, among the lesser figures towards the close we find Mawlana Mahvi Ardabili. The information is that he was born at Ardabil from a notable family, and educated at Shiraz. After spending a short

while in Isfahan, the desire to visit India entered his head. India, Hindustan is here as elsewhere in the work dignified by the epithet of *Dar al-aman*, "the abode of security", suggesting that it was a more pleasant and indeed safer place for the author and his fellow-poets to be than Iran under the Safavid dynasty with a prevailing atmosphere of religious persecution and a lack of courtly patronage. Accordingly Mahvi arrived by sea *via* Hormuz at Thattha, and joined the retinue of an exiled Persian nobleman in the Mughal service, Mirza Rustam Safavi. With the latter he visited Ajmer in 1615, where the author of the *tadhkira* met him. He was twenty seven years old. He then went on to Burhanpur, where he died after a short stay.¹⁶

The next notice is of a similar young man, Bagi had been a companion of the poet Hakim Shifa'i in Persian 'Iraq'. He went to Khurasan and mixed in poetical circles in Mashhad and Herat. The author met him at Ajmer in 1023/1614 when he had just come to India. He was then twenty years old and had a very good knowledge of music. He had secured the patronage of Mirza Ghiyath Beg I'timad al-Dawla [the father of Nur Jahan]. He then went from Ajmer to the Deccan and spent two years in the entourage of Sultan Khurram [the future emperor Shah Jahān]. After that he abandoned his *jagir* and occupied himself in "travel and trade" [*sayyari u tijarat*]. The author met him again in Patna five years later. By that time he had gained a great proficiency in Indian music [*rag-i Hindi*]. In the same year he left Patna for Benares, where he settled.¹⁷

These itineraries of unimportant travellers individually do not provide us with novel information, but when combined with many hundreds of similar curricula in the *tadhkiras*, it is possible that a significant picture of mobility and routes within Mughal India will emerge.

A more detailed and autobiographical narrative of travavels in South Asia between the years A.D. 1625 and A.D. 1631 is provided by Mahmud bin Amir Wali. The author was an inhabitant of Balkh now in North-West Afghanistan and in later years was Librarian [*Kitabdar*] to the local Janid prince Nadhi Muhammad. The account is incorporated in a world history which he wrote, entitled *Bahr al-asrar*. Its text was edited with a detailed English analysis by Professor Riazul Islam of Karachi University.¹⁸

Mahmud's narrative is of little value at many points where we should have expected it to yield concrete information. He passes some of the major towns and governmental and cultural centres without comment, and from our present of interest his remarks on the routes that he travelled are lacking in detailed observations. It is particularly disappointing that he has no details of the 36 stages between Konarak and Hyderabad, that is to say the coastal route of Orissa and northern Andhra Pradesh about which we have few travellers' descriptions of this period.¹⁹ He has probably misremembered the course of his itinerary between Hyderabad and the southern port of Kayalpattan, where he embarked for Ceylon. On the other hand there are passages of unexpected illuminating detail, *e.g.* his account of shipwreck in Orissa and the

manner in which the survivors were marched off to the durbar of the Mughal governor at Cuttack. His narrative confirms the continuing prevalence of an earlier custom of the sea, the seizure of cargoes of strayed or wrecked vessels, at this late date, on the eastern Indian coast and under a Mughal administration.²⁰

Although Mahmud was a man of education and literary pretensions, and later occupied respectable governmental and courtly posts, during his travels before he was brought to the Mughal governor at Cuttack he was a humble individual wanderer. He seems to have set out from Central Asia in a disturbed or discontented frame of mind and without financial resources; and to have then wandered in a 'joyous company' constantly on the road to mainly Hindu pilgrimage sites. The opacities and vaguenesses of the author's style often make it difficult to understand exactly what occurred, but he appears himself to have been a naked and ash-smeared figure indistinguishable in the throng, and mixing without prejudice with the non-Muslims around him. The narrative of his journey reflects continuing and rather limited interests. Prominent among these are natural curiosities and supernatural phenomena, especially those connected with sacred sites, tombs, springs, fountains and tanks; and the charms and supposed liberality of the Hindu and Sinhalese women he saw during his travels.

Mahmud's itinerary has been summarized as follows:

Balkh; Kabul; Peshawur, visiting Gorkhatri; Baba Hasan Abdal; Lahore, arrives 23 September 1625; Pant [?]; Sarhind, mentioning the garden of Hafiz Rakhna; Delhi; Mathura; Hilalabad, "two *karohs* from Agra, 27 October 1625; Agra; Barabazar; Ilahabad; Benares; crossing the Ganga; Patna, 28 January 1626; Bandar Pana [?] ['a riverine port on the Ganges somewhere between Patna and Rajmahal']; Rajmahal, first fortnight of March 1626; Daonapur [possibly Dinapur or Danapur, out of sequence]; Burdwan; Midnapur; Khurdah, mid May 1626; Jagannath [Puri], end of May 1626; Konarak; Kalapahar [?] and Qasimkota on the way from Konarak to Golconda; Hyderabad, described as 36 stages from Konarak, probably arrived end of July 1626; Anajpur [?], Mangalgiri, Andarki [?], Adawi [? Adoni] in the southern Deccan; Bijapur; Chandragutti [Mysore]; Takarkota, Kalyan, Huwel [?], Karijor [?], Tankar [?]; Batan; Bijanagar/ Vijayanagar; the towns of Barsang [?] and Haryal [?]; Kayalpattan; Sarandip/ Ceylon; sets out by sea for "Achin and Pegu and Shahr-i Nau [= Ayuthya in Siam]; shipwrecked near Suru, Balasore District; Khatak, two years stay, roughly from March 1627 to February 1629; visits to Mankandi and Jajpur; sets out from Orissa to Agra; Agra, arrives July/August 1629, one year's stay; Fathpur, Ajmer and Jaisalmer, rests 14 days; Alor, after 6 days' travel; Sakkar and Bakkar, stays of some [8?] months; Gandaba, Sibi and Harnai in Baluchistan; Pishin; Bust, arrives 23 April 1631; Farah; Herat, departs 12 July 1631; arrives at his home town of Balkh on 8 August 1631.²¹

We have seen above that the Sufi *tadhkira* and *malfuzat* literature provided valuable evidence about travellers and conditions of travel during the Sultanate period. For the Mughal period the abundance of information in European sources makes such scraps and fragments

of information less valuable in themselves, and most of the Sufi anecdotal literature is less vigorous, realistic and circumstantial than the earlier Indian Chishti compositions. Possibly also it has been less thoroughly investigated. The *Chishtiya bihishtiya* [Storey No. 1330], a mid-seventeenth century work, has an account of the visit of the musical north Indian Shaykh Baha' al-Din Barnawi to the Deccan and the court of Ibrahim 'Adil Shah. Some anecdotes of travel are to be found in the *tadhkiras* concerning Shaykh Ahmad Sarhindi and his family. *Zubdat al-maqmat* [Storey No. 1316(1)] and *Hazarat al-quds* [Storey No. 1323(2)].

Mention should also be made here of a Persian work describing religious sects which is not of Muslim or Sufi inspiration but the product of a member of an immigrant Iranian Zoroastrian circle, the *Dabistan-i madhahib*. This has fairly numerous references to the travels and places of temporary residence both of the author and of the wide variety of men of religion with whom he conversed.²²

From the references in the *Dabistan-i madhahib* to dates and places one can extrapolate a picture of travel and mobility in the Mughal empire and beyond its frontiers, a picture that is the more tantalizing because we can only speculate on the religious and social situation in which these journeys were undertaken. The author belonged to and perhaps led, a small group of cultivated Iranian Zoroastrians with a thick overlay of Islamic learning, who had been present in Shiraz in the third quarter of the sixteenth century and settled at Patna in Akbar's reign. Later they evidently also established a presence in Kashmir and the Punjab; and some members of the community were indefatigable travellers. It is not clear whence the financial support of this small community came, though they may have been traders as well as men of religion. The fragments of information in the *Dabistan* are so strange that they set speculation in motion. Thus a conversation in Kashmir is recorded in which the speaker, from his name possibly a non-Muslim(?) Central Asian servant who travelled with one of the community, refers to something which occurred to "us and the merchants... on the way back from Khanbaligh [Peking/Beijing] in the town of Turfan" – an almost solitary reference to the old Silk Route in the period.²³ Elsewhere the author tells us that another of his community, Parra Kaywan, "used to manifest himself in the garments of every sect." He records a conversation which Parra Kaywan held while travelling through Gujarat dressed as a *Bairagi*.²⁴

We can construct a curriculum of the author's movements from childhood to the time of the last additions to the work nearly forty years later. He was clearly a man who had the entrée to the company of influential Mughal officials and literary men, while important religious figures – among them Guru Har Gobind, Chidrup Gosa' in and Sarmad – as well as an assortment of Catholic priests, Tibetan Lamas, *Sannyasis*, *Vairagis* and Kashmiri and South Indian Brahmans were prepared to give time to his society and questioning. The places to which he travelled do not fit in easily with Mughal clerkly employment, nor with any obviously profitable pattern of trade. What was he doing at the close of this time in Sikakul "cast far away from the Parsis" [*az parsiyan dur afganda*] ?²⁵ The curriculum extends from the Hijri year 1025/1616 to 1063/1652:

Born *circa* 1025; brought as a young child to one 'Balak Nath' of great longevity, probably either at Tilla Bal Nath in the Salt Range, or else in the Panjab Himalaya;²⁶ travelled as a boy from Patna to Agra, where he first met Chidrop Gosa' in Kashmir, 1036 and 1040; "upper" Bangash, 1046; Kashmir, 1047; Benares, 1047; Lahore, 1048; travelled from Lahore to Kashmir and stayed there, 1048; Lahore, 1049; Kashmir, 1049; town of Gujarat in Panjab, 1050; Wazirabad, 1050; Lahore, 1052; Kiritpur in the hills of the Panjab, 1053; Kabul, 1053; Mashhad, 1053; Peshawur, 1055; Dotara, near Jodhpur in Marwar, 1056; Merta, Rajasthan, 1056[?]; Hyderabad, Sind, 1057; Surat, 1057; Gujarat in Panjab, 1059; Kalinga, 1059; Sikakul [Chicacole], "capital of Kalinga", 1063.²⁷

Among Sufi biographical works of the Mughal period, one collection presents a vivid and informative picture of conditions of travel in late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century India. It is a record of the activities of two Naqshbandi *Pirs* and their followers, who came from urban environments of Central Asia and mostly spent the latter portion of their lives in Mughal controlled areas of the Deccan. The work is the *Malguzat-i Naqshbandiyya*, written in the 1730s by Baba Shah Mahmud Awrangabadi, the appointed successor of one of the founding *Pirs*. From our point of view the work is the more valuable because it is concerned with the activities of wandering *Darweshes* of humble status who, in spite of their Naqshbandi affiliation, had strong *Qalandar antecedents*.²⁸

The patterns of travel revealed by the biographical notices of these followers of Baba Palangposh and Baba Musafir, show that the journeys of *Faqirs* were not much impeded by political or doctrinal obstacles in the eastern Islamic world during the late seventeenth century. The record of travels summarised below may be accepted as genuine except for a suspect first *Hajj* and other possible mythical details in the remote early movements of Baba Palangposh.²⁹ There is probably also confusion in the account of the latter's early visit to Awrangabad and his repeated movements to and from Hasan Abdal.³⁰ Besides Baba Palangposh's first *recorded Hajj* via Mashhad,³¹ two other *Darwishes* are said to have performed the *Hajj* from Transoxiana through Isfahan in Safavid [and Shisi] Iran,³² and Baba Musafir is stated to have performed the *Hajj* overland from Gujarat, *i.e.* presumably through Makran and Fars.³³ What would appear to be wild hearsay regarding the travels of one *Darwish*, Shah Haydar Tashkandi, to western lands receives partial confirmation in Ottoman sources.³⁴

We can reconstruct the following biographical sketches from the *Malfuzat-i Naqshbandiyya*.³⁵

1. Baba Palangposh Born at Ghajdawan near Bukhara [Mythical wandering in wilderness] Tashkent, Mashhad, [Mecca and Medina, 1st *Hajj*.] Balkh. Campaign against Qalmaqs. Mzar Sharif. Ghor. Kabul Peshawur. Hasan Abdal [1st stay, A.D. 1675]. Kashmir. Town of Gujarat, Panjab. Ahmadabad, Gujarat province. Mecca and Medina [2nd *Hajj*]. Hasan Abdal [2nd stay]. Shahjahanabad/Dehli. Awrangabad, Deccan [1st visit]. Hasan Abdal [3rd stay, sets out with a band of dependant *Faqirs*]. Shahjahanabad. Sironj. Ujjain. Burhanpur, Fardapur. Awrangabad

[2nd visit]. Around Deccan for many years with Mughal forces, visits to Awrangabad. Died at Gulbarga, A.D.1699. Buried at Awrangabad.³⁶

2. Baba Musafir. Born at Ghujdawan near Bukhara [father a Kubravi *Shaykh*, mother from a *Sayyid* family. Orphan, leaves home at the age of 7]. Bukhara. studied at *maktab*, sees Baba Palangposh]. Hisar. Balk [stay with Khwaja Hashimi]. Ghorī. Kabul. Peshawur. Hasan Abdal [meeting with Palangposh, grant of *khirqa*]. Bengal. Jagannath [Puri, Orissa]. Jinji. Tanjore, Hyderabad. Awrangabad [meeting with Palangposh, grant of *khilafat*]. Hasan Abdal [with Palangposh]. Bhakkar. Thattha. Surat. [Overland *Hajj*]. Mecca. Medina. [Return by sea]. Surat. Awrangabad. died there, A.D.1714.³⁷

3. Mir Mahmad. Born at Wabkan near Bukhara. Istalif [near Kabul]. Awrangabad [1st *Khalifa* of Musafir]. Bijapur [A.D.1707]. Karnul, killed in battle against the Maratha, A.D. 1707-08.³⁸

4. 'Abd al-Rahim. [Brother of Hajji 'Abd al-Karim, No.5 below; maternal uncle of Muhammad Amin Beg, Mughal commander in Deccan]. Family from Maymana, born in Peshawur. Deccan [service in Imperial Army]. Awrangabad [grant of *khirqa*, stay of many years]. Lahore. Shahjahanabad/Delhi. Kashmir [*Murids* mentioned]. Kabul. Balkh. Bukhara [ruler wished to build *Khanqah*]. Kulab. Hisar. Qunduz. Badakhshan [stay at *Khanqah* of Mawlana Mushfiqi, No.9 below]. Lahore, died A.D. 1716.³⁹ [His follower Mir Sultan is 'well-known in Kashmir' with many *Murids*].⁴⁰

5. 'Abd al-Karim. [Brother of 'Abd al-Rahim, No 4 above]. Family from Maymana, birthplace not recorded. Deccan ['in the service of the Emperor']. Awrangabad [stay of 3 years] Mecca [stay of 2 years]. Awrangabad [2nd stay of 12 days, left shortly before A.D. 1707]. Shahjahanabad/Delhi. Lahore [pension in A.D.1707]. Kashmir. Gujarat town, Panjab. [Abandoned intention of going to Kabul]. Lahore [mosque and *Khanqah* built]. Died at Lahore, A.D. 1726; buried beside No.4 above.⁴¹

6. Khwaja Muhammad Sa'id. [Nephew of Khwaja Muhammad Muhsin, a companion of Beddar Bakht, son of Prince Muhammad A'zam]. Ancestors from Transoxiana, born at Patna. Deccan [imperial service]. Awrangabad [grant of *khirqa*, also instructed by 'Abd al-Rahim, No.4 above]. Mecca.Medina. Awrangabad [2nd stay, grant of *khilafat*]. Shahjahanabad/Delhi [suburb of Mughalpura, *Khanqah* and mosque built by imperial eunuch, *Murids*]. Kashmir [traders become *Murids*]. Died in Kashmir, buried in 'the garden of *Shaykhs*' [Kashmiri traders].⁴²

7. Shah Qalandar. Born at Shah-quli Birkha[?] near Qunduz. [Father from 'the group of Awliya' Qurkhan']. Orphan, left home at the age of 12. Qunduz [*maktab*, pious teacher Shah Talib Khan, lives with uncle]. Joins *Faqirs* bound for Deccan. Kabul[stay of 6 months]. Rohtasgarh. Wazirabad. Lahore [Shahdara, Bagh-i Badshahi]. Multan [*Takya* of Shah Talib].

[Lahore?]. Shahjahanabad/Dehli [stay of 2 months in a number of *Takyas*]. Awrangabad [meets Baba Musafir]. Travels in Deccan with Palangposh [*Murid* ran away for two months]. Gulbarga Awrangabad [arrives with corpse of Palangposh, A.D. 1699]. Hyderabad Northern India [with Nizam al-Mulk after A.D. 1714]. Arcot [with Nizam al-Mulk]. Hyderabad [large following]. Murdered at Hyderabad, August 1730. Corpse interred at Awrangabad, April 1731.⁴³

8. Hajji 'Ashur. Turkish descent, brought up and educated by Baba Musafir at Awrangabad [*Murid*, *Khalifa*]. Mecca, Awrangabad.⁴⁴

9. Mawlana Mushfiqi. No details of place of birth or ancestry, 'originally in the service of the emperor 'Alamgir [Aurangzeb], trooper in the contingent of archers]. Awrangabad [*Murid*, employed in secretarial work]. Northern India [after A.D. 1707]. Lahore [after retirement, stays with 'Abd al-Rahim, No.4 above]. Badakhshan [*Khanqah* built, *Murids* including ruler]. Still alive *circa* A.D. 1733.⁴⁵

10. Sufi Muhammad Wafa. Born in Peshawur. [Relations in Aurangzeb's army]. Deccan [camp of the emperor]. Awrangabad [17 or 18 years old, attracted the attention of 'Abd al-Rahim. No.4 above, becomes *Murid* of Baba Musafir]. Shahjahanabad/Dehli [with uncles accompanying emperor Bahadur Shah, A.D. 1709; served 'Abd al-Rahim, No.4 above, there]. Settled in Mughalpura [suburb of Dehli; built mosque and *Khanqah*]. Still living *circa* A.D. 1733.⁴⁶

11. Mir 'Arab. A *Sayyid* from Sar-i Pul quarter of Balkh. Comes to India. Deccan [imperial service, siege-artillery; married, abandoned employment]. Awrangabad [*Murid* of Baba Musafir instructed by 'Abd al-Rahim, No.4 above]. Hindostan [North India]. Shahjahanabad/Dehli [with family in A.D. 1700].⁴⁷ Resided at Mughalpura, Dehli at *Khanqah* of Khwaja Muhammad Sa'id, No.6 above. Possible alive there in A.D. 1733.⁴⁸

12. Shah Khadim. Born at Hisar. Left for Deccan, aged 7. Awrangabad [*Murid*, granted *khiqa*]. Shahjahanabad/Dehli. Surat 'and Gujarat'. Bengal. Masulipatan. Danda-Rajauri. Konkan. Kashmir [?out of sequence]. Jinji. Tanjore. Awrangabad. Accepted *Murids*. Lived to '90 years old', left *tabarrukat* to author of *Malfuzat-i Naqshbandiyya*. Died at Awrangabad in April 1731.⁴⁹

13. Hajji Qasim. Born at Dawlatabad near Balkh. Orphan. Awrangabad [*Murid*, granted *khirqah*]. Mecca, Medina. Awrangabad [2nd stay]. Indpur. Deccan [with military commandant, given land]. Awrangabad [3rd stay, in time of famine].⁵⁰

14. Shah Kuchak. Born at Balkh. Possibly orphan, reared in grand household. Awrangabad [*Murid*, granted *Khirqah*, lifelong stay]. Intended to revisit Wilayat/Transoxiana, dissuaded by Baba Musafir. Died at Awrangabad in A.D. 1697.⁵¹

15. Shah Nazir. Born at Samarqand. 'In the service of', Baba 'Abd al-Rahim [possibly No.4 above, in Lahore or Transoxiana]. Deccan [joins Palangposh, granted *khilafat*, not separated 'till his death' in A.D. 1699]. Awrangabad [stayed 'some time']. Ellichpur[? summoned by Ghazi al-Din Khan, *Khanqah* built]. Gujarat [with Ghazi al-Din Khan, A D 1709]. Shahjahanabad/Dehli [with Ghazi al-Din Khan's corpse, A.D. 1710]. Lahore [accompanied by a band of *Faqirs*]. Kashmir. Shahjahanabad/Dehli. Awrangabad [2nd stay, with Nizam al-Mulk, present at Baba Musafir's death, A.D. 1714]. Shahajahanabd/Dehli [2nd stay]. Lahore[with 'Abd al-Samad Khan, provincial governor]. [Badakhshan?]. Set out for Hindostan again. Died at Charikar.⁵²

16. Khwaja 'Alam. Born at Balkh. descendant of Naqshbandi *Khwaja* 'Ala' al-Din 'Attar. Awrangabad [*Faqir* and *Murid*]. Wilayat/Transoxiana. Awrangabad [2nd stay lasting one year, after A.D. 1714]. Mecca. Medina. Surat. Died at Surat.⁵³

17. Mirza Ibrahim 'Arab [Shah'Arab]. Born at Kabul. Ancestors held high office, fled after murdering a Shi'i Jalalabad. Deccan, [imperial service, troop of Mir *Bakhshi*]. Jinji [campaign of Prince Kambakhsh, A.D. 1691-92; relations in same force, abandoned employment]. Galgala [imperial camp of Awrangzeb]. Awrangabad [1st stay, initially in mosque; *Murid*]. Mecca. Medina. Taif. Awrangabad [2nd stay]. Died at Awrangabad.⁵⁴

18 Akhond Mulla Khamosh [Mulla Nazar Muhammad]. Born near Balkh. *via* Iran to Mecca. Awrangabad [*Murid*; *khirqqa*; schoolmaster at *Takya*]. Died at Awrangabad.⁵⁵

19 Shah Jan Allah. With Palangposh in Deccan [granted *Khilafat* by himl]. Awrangabad. Navsani, near Surat [*Murids*]. Came back to Awrangabad to die, after A.D. 1699.⁵⁶

20 Hajji Sadiq. Born at Naw Shibarghan [?] in Wilayat/Transoxiana. Deccan [follower of Nizam al-Mulk]. Hindostan/North India. Kashmir [*Murids*]. Shahjahanabad/Delhi [stayed at *Madrassa* of Ghazi al-din Khan]. Set out for Awrangabad, after A.D. 1714. Died *en route*.⁵⁷

21. Shah Haydar Tashkandi. *Murid* of Palangposh. Habash/Abyssinia [imprisoned]. Firangistan/Europe. Mecca. Rom/Ottoman empire. Iskandariyya/Scutari [founded *Takya* at Bulbul Darasi; patronage of Sultan Mustafa]. Died at Iskandariyya.⁵⁸

22. Khwaja Zakariya' Samarqandi. Born in Wilayat/Transoxiana, descendant of Naqshbandi *Khwaja*, 'Makhdum-i A'zam'. Hindostan. Deccan. Galgala [camp of emperor Awrangzeb, between A.D. 1690 and 1695; awarded pension]. Awrangabad [long residence. Set out for Wilayat/Transoxiana. Hindostan. Lahore. Peshawur. Kabul. Died at Kabul, A.D. 1704-1705. Buried at Balkh].⁵⁹

In addition to these notices the *Malfuzat-i Naqshbandiyya* has incidental references to the wanderings of similar travellers. The son of 'Abd al-Rahim [No. 4 above], who was probably born in the Deccan, went north, then came back from Balkh to Bahadurgarh in the Deccan. After a stay in Awrangabad he went again to Wilayat.⁶⁰ Khwaja Mu'min, the son-in-law of Hajji 'Abd al-Rahim Balkhi, travelled from Balkh by way of Isfahan to Mecca and Medina. He then came to Awrangabad, after Baba Musafir's death in A.D. 1714. Later he went to Shahjahanabad, where he met Shah Qalandar [No. 7 of the list above]. Then he went back to Wilayat.⁶¹ Shah Khaki and Shah Shayda, two of the *Darwishes* of the band with whom Shah Qalandar had set off as a boy, had returned from the Deccan to Qunduz at that time, probably not later than around A.D. 1690. Soon after, they set out again, *via* Kabul, Lahore and Shahjahanabad. About four decades later they were at Shahjahanabad, residing in the *Madrasa* of Ghazi al-Din Khan.⁶²

In the narratives of the *Malfuzat-i Naqshbandiyya* there is also information about conditions of travel. Of the travellers Khawaja Zakariya' [No. 22 above] was an aristocrat travelling with an entourage. Our text mentions that one stage after his final ceremonious departure from Awrangabad, because he was feeling the cold he sent back word to Baba Musafir to forward to him a fur coat.⁶³ The imperial troopers who turned towards Baba Musafir, rode across the Deccan, sometimes alone but more often with companions; the journey was not safe from attacks by the Marathas.⁶⁴ Shah Arab [No. 17 above] travelled from Jinji to Galgala riding an ox.⁶⁵ The mother and sisters of 'Abd al-Rahim and 'Abd al-Karim [Nos. 4 and 5 above] travelled by bullock-cart from Awrangabad to northern India.⁶⁶

One reference indicates that the leaders of these bands of *Faqirs* coming from Transoxiana bound for India may have been mounted, and even possessed valuable horses:

In the days when Hazrat [Baba Palangposh] was in Kabul, one of the *Faqirs* took out a grand horse, which was worth a thousand rupees, to water it. At a fruitseller's shop in the bazaar, he saw that there some very good grapes. His heart longed to eat grapes and, as he had no money, he left the horse with the gardener [*baghban* -market-gardener = fruitseller], and he took five seers [*athar*] of grapes from him. He then went into a corner and fell asleep.

When the servitors of Baba Palangposh did not see the horse, they made inquiries; and it became clear that this *Faqir* had taken the horse off to water it. When they asked him, he replied:

"The horse is tied up at the shop of such-and-such a fruitseller."

When they went to the gardener [fruitseller, of above] and asked, he replied that such

and such a *Faqir* had left it with him as a pledge in exchange for five *seers* of grapes. The servitors went to Baba Palangposh and informed him of what had happened. Hazrat, when he heard of the matter, was much pleased. He summoned the *Faqir*, exclaiming: "How kind! Well done!"

And he gave the horse to the gardener.⁶⁷

Nevertheless most of the *Darwishes*, if they had not attained to positions of respect and authority, must have travelled on foot like the 150 or 200 "*Faqirs* of Wilayat" who accompanied the stirrup of Baba Palangposh.⁶⁸ Baba Musafir, travelling on foot, is said to have carried a waterskin on his overland journey of forty stages from Surat to Mecca, though this may be a hagiographical embellishment.⁶⁹ Shah 'Arab [No. 17 above] similarly walked from Mecca to Medina with a waterskin, though he had the means to go on horseback.⁷⁰ One *Darwish* [No. 19], came on foot from Surat to Awrangabad when he was ready to die.⁷¹ Like earlier Sufi travellers, Shah Qalandar [No. 7 above], had a dream of being abandoned in the desert without a habitation in sight.⁷² Another reference indicates how many casualties there might be among the *Faqirs* on these rough and distant journeys:

Baba Palangposh arrived /at Awrangabad/some days after/news of his coming had reached the Takya/, and he stayed in the bungalow beside the stream. He was ill with gripes [*pechash*]. Of the *Faqirs* who were with him, some had remained behind at Shahjahanabad, some in Sironj, a number in Ujjain and Burhanpur, and Shah Nazir and Shah Manzur in Fardapur. In this manner they had stopped behind on account of illnesses while some had arrived with Baba Palangposh.⁷³

A vivid description of a travelling band of *Darwishes* and of their staging posts occurs in the personal narrative of Shah Qalandar. A band of 'cloak-wearers' performing 'loud recitation' [*dhikr-i jahr*] arrived at a village near Qunduz and told the narrator, then a twelve year old boy, of the holiness of Baba Palangposh in the Deccan. After they had left the village, he ran off to join them, and caught up with them some days later.

"Hazrat is in the Deccan," the *Faqirs* then remarked to him. "You are small, and it would be impossible for you to travel such vast distances. For this reason we did not think that you should join us; but now you should not leave our company."⁷⁴

Shah Qalandar's narrative continues:

"In the company of the *Faqirs* I reached Kabul. Outside the gate of the city there is a *Takya* of a *Faqir* called Murtaza Shah Anandi. It is a verdant place with good air, and the *Faqirs* encamped there. Every day they went out sightseeing towards the city, and I washed and swept their lodging-place, and filled the vessels with water and put them [in their place]. I was occupied with this until the *Faqirs* returned."

"At the end of the day they came back, and each one of them out of affection brought an apple or some other fruit for me. At night each one lit a candle in front of him, there were about seventy of them and there was a wonderful glitter from the candles. After they had all come back and settled in their own places, I used to go out and beg. What God provided I passed on to the *Faqirs*; and it was shared out and I myself ate a portion with them."⁷⁵

After six months had passed in this manner at Kabul, Shah Qalandar with several older *Faqirs* separated from the main band and set out to join Baba Palangposh in the Deccan. Shah Qalandar, although he was given a *khirqah* by them in the name of Palangposh, at this point complains of ill-treatment by the older *Faqirs*. At the fort of Rohtnagarh on the India, the boy was also severely beaten by 'a Mughal' for wandering too far inside an apparently deserted mansion while calling out for alms⁷⁶. Shortly after this, at a *Takya* in Wazirabad, 'the disparagement, abuse and violence of the *Faqirs* towards [himself] passed all bounds.' In the morning when they set out he refused to accompany them, telling them:

"If they had other ideas, I would go to Lahore and tell the *Faqirs* there of their violence and abuse, and we would see what they said."⁷⁷

From Shah Qalandar's narrative, a picture emerges of a well-established network of *Takyas* and caravanserays where up to seventy or more travelling *Faqirs* could stay, though at the end of the seventeenth century possibly, Shahjahanabad was still not so well provided as Lahore or Kabul,⁷⁸ a deficiency which was perhaps later remedied by the building of the *Madrasa* of Ghazi al-Din Khan.⁷⁹ Elsewhere the solitary traveller often sought to stay in the local mosque. Thus we are told that Baba Musafir stayed in the mosque at Ghorī in Afghanistan until a local notable invited him to teach his son.⁸⁰ During his early travels in India Baba Musafir would lodge in local mosques, but at one place the common people [*mardum-i 'awamm*] threw him out.⁸¹ Later, when Baba Musafir went on a pilgrimage to Mecca, at Surat he was forbidden to stay in a mosque by the Muezzin and preacher [*khatib*] because he was suffering from a skin-disease. 'An educated and kindly man', who passed him on his way to prayer, took him home and cared for him till his recovery.⁸²

Some measure of discipline was maintained among the travelling bands of *Faqirs*. The group who passed through Qunduz initially tried to discourage the boy Shah Qalandar from joining them, evidently because he had relations living there who would object.

"Do your relations give their permission?" the *Faqirs* asked.⁸³

At a major staging-post along the trail, complaints could be heard and settled among the *Faqirs* themselves, as is evident from Shah Qalandar's threat to bring his ill-treatment to the attention of the *Faqirs* at Lahore.⁸⁴

Such bands of wayfaring *Darwishes* appear to have continued the tradition of groups of travelling *Qalandars*, who were particularly prominent in the thirteenth century.⁸⁵ Such a connection was perhaps acknowledged by the inclusion of a *Qalandari shajara* [pedigree], along with those of the Naqshbandi and Kubrawi *tariqas* in the *Malfuzat-i Naqshbandiyya*,⁸⁶ and by the appellation Baba borne by the principal figures. As among earlier *Qalandars*, celibacy was the norm in these travelling bands, as well as among those who settled in the *Takya* in Awrangabad.

The *Malfuzat-i Naqshbandiyya* also gives a picture of the much grander manner of travel of an established Sufi *Pir*, supported by abundant offerings. Baba Palangposh acted as a kind of military chaplain to the army of the Mughal general Ghazi al-Din Feroz Jang on the march in the Deccan. At the Baba's camp there was a scene of largesse, with numerous not particularly Sufi hangers-on and dishes of choice food being cooked and distributed, and a choice of edifying entertainment:

"On one side accomplished men of letters, and skilful poets, seated together, conducted disputations and poetic contests, so that the noise of their disputation would reach his blessed ear. Then he would rise from his place, and approach them smiling, and graciously enquire:

"What are you discussing?"

Then they would submit their preoccupation, and Hazrat would promptly say two or three words that would pacify them all, and they would agree. On another side musicians brought the hearts of listeners of listeners to ecstasy with sweet melodies, singing and playing the *tambur* [long-necked lute] and other instruments."⁸⁷

On the march, the progress of Baba Palangposh resembled that of a great Mughal Amir, except that his retinue was of *Darwishes*:

"Around 150 to 200 men, *Faqirs* of Wilayat, bearing quivers, went beside his bridle. Another band, bare headed and barefoot, had nothing but a single loincloth on their bodies, acquired felicity by looking after the horses and camels and other tasks."⁸⁸

"At the time striking camp, in the vanguard before the cavalcade there were carried up on the backs of porters seventy or eighty or up to nearly a hundred clay tubs of flowering trees; and these porters received wages every day, even more than what was due to them. Wherever he encamped, he found instantly laid out 'the rose-garden of Iram'. Apart from those who visited out of piety, many people came to see the rose-garden; and all carried away enjoyable memories from the benefits of his favours."⁸⁹

I have taken you on a long journey along the roads of India of three centuries ago, roads which were then dusty and wearisome, but without the pall of polsonus black smoke which too often hangs over them today. I leave you with the pleasanter thought of that portable garden of flower-pots, so conformable with the love that is manifest in Mughal art for the individual flowering plant, furnished by this warlike Sufi *Pir* for travellers to contemplate at the end of the day.

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23. *Op. cit.*, I, pp. 38-39. The name of this "trusted servant" [*ghulam-i' tabar*] of one of the group of Parsee illuminati was Qara Qazi [Turkish, "Black Snow-goose"?]. The author gives eyewitness testimony of his Shamanistic power of rain-making, summoning up in his presence a storm which ruined the crops of villagers in Kashmir and caused their mud-houses to collapse; *loc. cit.*
24. *Op. cit.*, I, pp. 180.
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26. Encounters with Bal Nath, Balgunda'i or jalandhari are discussed in a forthcoming study by the present writer, *Sufis and Yogis; encounters and confrontations*. Among those who in previous centuries themselves related their meeting with claimants to be this long-lived personage are Sayyid Muhammad Gesudaraz and Father Monserrate.
27. These references, scattered throughout the work, are collected together in the editor's notes and commentary, II, 10-16.
28. See below, pp. 14-15.
29. Baba Shah Mahmud Awrangabadi, *Malfuzat-i Naqshbandiyya*; *halat-i Hazrat Baba Shah Musafir Sahib*. [Hyderabad, Dn.] Nizamat-i Umaur-i Madhabi-i Sarkar-i 'Ali, A.H. 1358/1939, pp. 4-5. Henceforth indicated as *MN*. A detailed discussion by the present writer of the contents of this work is in course of publication by the Institut Francais at Istanbul in a volume now in the press on the Naqshbandi confraternity.

30. *MN*, pp. 15-18, 24.
31. *MN*, p. 5.
32. *MN*, pp. 13, 166.
33. *MN*, pp. 19-20.
34. See no. 21 of the biographical itineraries below and note 56.
35. Apart from Nos. 1 and 2, all of these itineraries derive mainly from the notices in the concluding part of the *Malfuzat-i Naqshbandiyya*, but *Darwishes* or 'friends' of whom the notices lack information regarding their travels are omitted from the enumeration.
36. *MN*, pp. 2-11, 15-18, 24-26, 43, 141.
37. *MN*, pp. 8-11, 15-21, 55.
38. *MN*, pp. 113, 116.
39. Bilgrami, *Ma'athir al-kiram*, p. 173, says he died in 1130/1718. He also gives him the nisba Balkhi. Bilgrami is probably confusing him with Hajji 'Abd al-Rahim Balkhi, co-*Murid* with Baba Palangposh of Baba Qul Mazid, for whom see *MN*, pp. 13, 15, 157.
40. *MN*, pp. 118, 125, 126.
41. *MN*, pp. 121, 122, 123, 124-25.
42. *MN*, pp. 127, 128.
43. *MN*, pp. 130-35, 137-38, 139-41.
44. *MN*, p. 143. No information is given regarding his *Hajj*.
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46. *MN*, p. 148.
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48. *MN*, pp. 148-50.
49. *MN*, pp. 150, 152.
50. *MN*, p. 153.
51. *MN*, p. 155.
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66. *MN*, p. 125.
67. *MN*, p. 38.
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71. *MN*, p. 169.
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76. *MN*, p. 132.
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79. *MN*, pp. 132, 170, *See* note 34 above.
80. *MN*, p. 10.
81. *MN*, p. 55.
82. *MN*, p. 18.
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85. *See* S. Digby, "Qalandars and related groups: elements of social deviance in the religious life of the Delhi sultanate of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries", in Y. Friedmann, ed. , *Islam in Asia*, Vol. I, *South Asia*, Jerusalem 1984, pp. 60-108.
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AGRA — QUANDAHAR : THE VICISSITUDES OF A GREAT CARAVAN ROUTE IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

NIELS STEENSGAARD

IN the economic history of Mughal India attention has generally been focussed on the seaborne trade, while the overland routes have been more or less ignored. The rich source material of the company archives facilitates the study of the seaports and shipping, while evidence of the land transport is scattered and presents considerable problems of interpretation. It has been tempting to conclude too hastily- also, perhaps, under the impression of overland transport costs as compared to the costs of sea transport in a later age- that the caravan transport was insignificant. Moreland considered the route from India to Persia by way of Quandahar, he concluded that its volume in normal years hardly could be more than 3000 camels' loads or 500 tons and found it possible that part of this was diverted by Dutch and English navigation. "The question is, however, obscure, and the volume of trade concerned is in any case too small to make it worth while to go into the matter in detail; the important developments of Indian commerce took place on the sea.....".¹ The authors of the Cambridge Economic History of India may be taken to ascribe to the same view, the volume contains no analysis of the overland trade to Persia.

Some recent studies have reopened the issue. Van Santen in his penetrating study of the Dutch East India Company in Gujarat and Hindustan, drew attention to the complementarity of the sea route from Surat to Gombroon (Bandar Abbas) and the overland trade between Agra and Ispahan over Quandahar and pointed out that the growth in Surat exports to Persia, particularly in the second half of the seventeenth century, not necessarily indicated a growth in total Indian exports, as the development on the overland route is unknown.²

Has the significance of the caravan route between India and Persia by way of Quandahar been underestimated? Moosvi's recent analysis of surviving treasure-troves from the Mughal period seems to indicate that this is the case. If the method is reliable, and I think it is, at least as an indicator of larger fluctuations, the rupee coinage from the mints of the North-West (Lahore, Multan, Thatta, Kabul and Quandahar) was often larger than the output of the Gujarat mints and in two ten year periods (1616-25 and 1636-45) it was 40-41 per cent of total North Indian Mogul coinage. In the period 1646-1665 the contribution of the North-West Indian mints was still considerable (22 and 27 percent), but during the last decades of the century the decline is regular (13, 12, 7 and 4 per cent).³

Even without supporting evidence this trend forms a strong argument for a revision of the current views on the importance of the caravan route Agra-Quandahar. In the present paper

an attempt will be made to compare the trend to the scattered data on the vicissitudes of the route in order to gauge the significance and fluctuations of the trade carried on along the long and arduous trail.

First of all, was it at all possible that an international caravan trade of great economic significance survived and flourished in the seventeenth century? Were not the dangers and costs of this mode of transport too great to allow a steady stream of commodities?

Of course it was possible, the direct transportation costs of the caravan trade has generally been overestimated, in actual practice camels and other transport animals were surprisingly efficient and cheap.⁴ The route linked one of the most highly developed areas of production of the age, the North Indian plain, to the densely populated Persian and Turkish empires, the Indian export commodities, particularly high quality textiles, indigo and to some extent sugar, were of high value relatively to their bulk, and the main import, silver, even more so.

The quantitative data are few and not very reliable, but a few computations will show the potential capacity of the caravan route. A detailed Dutch memorandum from 1634 estimates the total textile transport along the Agra-Quandahar route at 210700 pieces and the value as follows :

Price in buying	Rs. 743,000
Costs	Rs. 149,000
Profit	<u>Rs. 493,000</u>
Sales price	<u>Rs. 1,385,000</u> ⁵

(Conversion from Persian coin into rupees has been made according to the rate of exchange indicated by the source: 2,549 mahmudi per rupee. This is an under estimation of the intrinsic silver value of the Persian coin).

The same memorandum calculates the cost of transport from Agra to Ispahan at 20 per cent by way of Quandahar and 27 per cent by way of Surat. Assuming (a very low estimate) that a camel carried a little more than a hundred pieces, 2000 camels could have transported the whole consignment. Each camel would have carried 3,715 rupees worth of textiles, at a cost of 745 rupees (including customs etc.) and earning the merchant a comfortable profit of 2,465 rupees. In 1615 the costs of camel transport Lahore-Ispahan was estimated at 120-130 rupees,⁶ and in all probability the capacity of the camels was higher. At any rate the sales revenue, if carried home in silver, would only weigh 5-16 metric tons and could be transported by less than a hundred camels.

The second most important export commodity on the Quandahar route was byana indigo or—as it was called in the ports of the Levant—Lahore indigo. As prices went in Lahore and Agra, the ordinary buying price of a camel's load of byana indigo would vary from 200 to 400 rupees.⁷ The total annual production of byana indigo can be estimated at 400-700,000 pond in the seventeenth century,⁸ *i.e.* it could be carried by 1000-2000 camels.

Powdered sugar, another important export, was less costly, in 1638 the price of a camel's load in Agra would have been 40-45⁹ rupees, in Lahore or Multan probably less, still the profit on sales in Persia must have been sufficient to cover the costs and guarantee a profit. One price quotation from Ispahan gives a price corresponding to 156 rupees for a camel's load.¹⁰

The examples show that the profits were sufficient to support the trade and that the number of camels needed to carry commodities worth millions of rupees was not excessively large, smaller in fact than the number of camels generally traversing along the route. 12-14,000 camels a year around 1615 though this is said to be an extraordinary increase from a normal level of 3000, and caused by the wars the Portugues have had in recent years, making the transport by way of Hormuz unsafe.¹¹ Already in 1610 we are told that there are always 7-8000 camels around Quandahar "which trade to and fro with merchandize".¹² In 1615 Thomas Coryat travelled from Persia to India with a caravan of "2000 camels, 1500 horses, 1000 and odds mules, 800 asses and six thousand people".¹³ In 1617 the English ambassador, Sir Thomas Roe¹⁴ estimated the annual number of camels on the route to Quandahar at 20,000, but he does not appear to be very well informed. In 1635 a caravan of 4,000 camels from Quandahar is recorded as arriving in Ispahan with cottons.¹⁵ In 1639 the annual arrivals in Ispahan are estimated at 20-25,000 camels, mostly carrying cottons from India, in 1644 the arrivals totalled 6,000 camels.¹⁶ In 1665 a caravan of 1,000 camels "by way of Candahar" is recorded in Ispahan.¹⁷

So, the estimates that we know of indicate that caravans of thousands of camels were involved and that, even if the volume of trade along the route could never be excessive, very high values were handled by the caravan merchants.

The Lahore-Quandahar link to the West was of course much older, but there can hardly be any doubt that it took on new significance in the late sixteenth and the early seventeenth century. Considering the share of silver in the Indian imports it is highly probable that the main attraction has been the high price differentials in terms of silver along the route, the cheap silver of the West rather than the cheap commodities of the East. At any rate, Indian merchants participated extensively in the long distance trade, colonies of Indian merchants are recorded in Kashan¹⁸ and Ispahan.¹⁹

Whether as cause or effect, the growing trade may have been accompanied by a distinctive change in Persian consumption patterns. In 1566 an English traveller observed that "the people

are given much to wear cloth: the common people specially wear karsies, and the merchants of more wealth wear broad cloth".²⁰ But in 1613 the Venetian consul in Aleppo recorded among the causes of decline in the Aleppo trade that the sales of cloth for the Persian market were less than a fourth of what they used to be, because the Persians now used cottons instead of woolen cloth.²¹

At any rate, there is ample evidence that cotton was the common material for garments in Persia by the early seventeenth century. Everybody was dressed in cottons according to the Carmelite Paul Simon who visited Persia in 1608.²² The gown of the Persians is described as "calico stitched with silk or quilted with cotton". In 1628,²³ and in 1618 an English merchant writes from Persia : "... the banians [are] the chief merchants who vend linen of India of all sorts and prices which this country cannot be without, except the people should go naked ..."²⁴

Whether this was a new pattern of consumption, as indicated by the letter of the Venetian consul, cannot be determined, but it is significant that the preferred qualities of cotton materials in the Persian market were from the central Indian area and from the South, some from Sind, but none from Gujarat. As all other markets for Indian textiles the Persian market was conservative, we must assume that the pattern of demand reflects a first opening of the trade by way of Quandahar, only at a late date supplemented by the route through Multan, Sind and Hormuz. The importance of the trade between Sind and Hormuz is confirmed by Dutch observations of ships arriving to Hormuz in normal years before the fall of the Portuguese town in 1622, 8 ships from the Mouth of the Indus and 3 from Nagenia primarily carrying textiles out of a total of 54 ships. These ships could and probably did carry materials from the central and southern parts of India, which could be shipped from Lahore to Thatta, but the strong emphasis on these materials in the Persian market and its total lack of interest in Gujarat cottons indicate that the route by way of Sind was a late development.

Steele's observations give a strong impression that the years before the fall of the Portuguese Hormuz in 1622 was a boom period for the Quandahar route. He found the town so "much enlarged lately, that the suburbs are bigger than the city", and he even found the mountain people pacified, "partly for fear of the Mogoll, and partly through sweet found by commerce".²⁵

Though we have very few descriptions of the route, we find several pieces of evidence illustrative of the high level of activity particularly in the second and third decades of the century. In August 1611 the news of the assassination of Henry IV, which had taken place in May 1610, reached Agra with a caravan.²⁶ The travels of the English factor, William Finch, illustrate very well the ease with which the caravan route could be substituted for the ocean route. In 1611 Finch found himself in Lahore with a consignment of indigo bought for the East India Company. He had arrived at Surat in 1608 and stayed in India in the company's service, but apparently he lost faith in the future of direct English shipping to India and decided

to return home over land with eleven mules' loads of best byana indigo and some other toys of no great value. In the company of 3 other Englishmen he came as far as Bagdad, where he died, possibly from poisoning.²⁷

Johan Mildenhall was another famous traveller on the Quandahar route in the early seventeenth century. Some time between 1600 and 1603 he travelled to Lahore from Aleppo by way of Kashan and Quandahar. After some years stay he returned, presumably along the same route and was back in England in 1608 or 1609. He applied for employment in the service of the East India Company and was turned down, but in 1611 he travelled along the caravan route again provided with capital by a number of prominent East India and Levant merchants. He died in India in 64 leaving an estate valued at 5500 rupees. It is illustrative of the way of life of the long-distance travellers that he made a Frenchman his executor on condition that he married a daughter who he had left in Persia.²⁸

Finch had decided to take his indigo to Europe over land, in 1617. We find an example of change in the opposite direction. Two merchants, Vicentia Matance and Antonio Doro sold a small lot of indigo to the East India Company in Surat for 5721 pesos to be paid in London.²⁹ It was their intention to embark on a company ship for London, but apparently they changed thier minds. Four years later they were still travelling between Persia and India and carrying letters for the English Company.³⁰

One of the most memorable incidents recorded from the route is the encounter near Quandahar between the English "tourist", Thomas Coryat, and the Persian ambassador, Robert Sherley, bringing with him among other varities two elephants and eight antilopes, but it is important to emphasize, that the long travels along the caravan routes were not adventures in the wilderness, but routine business supported by a financial and administrative infrastructure. When, for instance, Steele was sent to Ispahan from India, he was given a sum in cash and was instructed to have it transferred to Ispahan from a merchant in Agra.³¹ From Sir Thomas Roe's correspondence we get a glimse of a company trading with Lahore from Aleppo. By "accident" Roe got into his possession letters from this company addressed to a Jeronimo Galicia including powers of attorney for the recovering of "money and goods in the hands of Signor Benelli, their factor resident in Lahore, who about ten months past were slain and robbed".³² What is most interesting about this incident is the demonstration that experienced business men in Aleppo though it worthwhile to go to the expence of a messenger in order to claim money and goods due to them in Lahore on the strength of transcripts from the register of the Venetian consul in Aleppo.

Unfortunately, the surviving documentation so far only concerns Europeans whose numbers on the route were relatively insignificant, but we have no reason to believe that the infrastructural routines of the Indian and the Armenian merchants have been fundamentally different or less efficient.

The boom years of the Quandahar route in the years before the fall of Hormuz are fairly well documented in the sources, but the fate of the route during the following decades is more difficult to follow, owing to the lack of documentation. The first years after the fall of Hormuz seem to have been characterized by an increased interest in the route by way of Surat and Bandar Abbas. One obvious indication of this trend is the pressure brought to bear on both the English and the Dutch Company to persuade them to make shipping available for freight for the account of Indian merchants.³³ But this may only reflect a growing concentration of the export business in Surat after the Portuguese loss of control, and the fear of Portuguese reprisals against unprotected shipping without *cartaze*. The campaign of Abbas and his conquest of Quandahar in 1622 hardly affected the route for long. Already by August in the same year it was known in Ispahan that the route was reopened.³⁴

According to Pelsaert Lahore was in decline by the 1620's. It used, he says, to be the staple of indigo, which was bought for the caravans for Quandahar, Ispahan and Aleppo by Armenians and merchants from Aleppo, but in Pelsaert's days the indigo was brought to Agra. Fine cottons from Golconda, Masulipatam and Mangapatnam were still carried through Lahore, but not as much as in former times, because the merchants on the caravan route could not compete with the cheaper transport of the companies.³⁵

Pelsaert is usually well-informed. His description of Lahore indicates that indigo had disappeared from the caravan route. This was not entirely the case, but references are scarce after c.1620, and the volume of English re-exports of indigo to the Mediterranean (in 1626 and 1627, 268,000 lbs. and 45,000 lbs.)³⁶ must necessarily have meant a reduction in demand in Aleppo with repercussions as far away as in Lahore.

The most telling piece of information given by Pelsaert, however, was the specialization of the Surat merchants trading to Persia. They carried textiles from Golconda and Mangapatnam to Ispahan, but not such commodities as were traded by the Dutch.³⁷ Again a shift from the caravan route to the sea is indicated.

But the caravan route had not been abandoned. In February 1630 low prices on cottons were recorded in Ispahan as having been caused by excessive import overland.³⁸ In the winter 1630/1631 the ships from Surat to Bandar Abbas arrived very late in the season. The merchants waiting for their arrival began to be impatient, "they began to withdraw themselves back with intention to go over land for India by Candahar".³⁹ From the 1630's we have the Dutch memorandum of the imports into Persia by way of Quandahar mentioned above and several other references in the Dutch records proving that trade by way of Quandahar continued. In 1638 Quandahar again came under the Mughal rule. In the following years merchants may have preferred the sea-route as being safer,⁴⁰ but from 1641 we have another eye witness report from the Quandahar route, Sebastian Manrique. His comments are sparse, but they leave no doubt

that he was travelling on a normal route, ordinarily frequented by merchants. In order not to be conspicuous, he is advised to disguise himself as a merchant and to buy commodities for 2,000 rupees and two camels for 200 rupees.⁴¹

In 1649 Quandahar was conquered by the Persians and wars continued for three or four years. It was not the first time that the important town changed hands, but the fighting appears to have been unusually severe after 1649. It is probable, that the strong official interest in the shipping of Surat by the middle of the seventeenth century was the result of a deliberate policy following the loss of Quandahar. Freight rates in Surat had been declining in the late 1640's due to excessive tonnage available, nevertheless the Moghul Emperor, in 1651, ordered four to six ships to be built for his account in Surat for the transport of commodities towards Mocha and Bandar Abbas. In 1652, before the new ships were available, freight rates suddenly increased because of increased export activities, and six more ships were commissioned. In 1653, the ships were ready, though not allowed to sail for Persia because of the war, but during the following years the emperor's ships, which were accorded preferential treatment, had a depressive effect on the freight rates between Surat and Bandar Abbas.⁴² It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the Indian export trade by way of Surat in this manner was subventioned in order to divert trade from the Quandahar route after the Persian conquest.

There was no permanent stop to the caravan trade, however. Tavernier passed through some years before 1661, he noted that the route by way of Multan had been abandoned, and that most merchants then went by way of Kabul even if this route was ten days longer. Tavernier also noted that the route by way of Quandahar was less frequented than it used to be—before the coming of the Portuguese to Hormuz, a rather unlikely statement. Nevertheless many merchants preferred to go over land rather than by way of Bandar Abbas, and some of the finest textiles exported from India to Persia followed the Quandahar route. Silver was brought to India in exchange, Spanish pesos and German rixdollars.⁴³

So, where does this lead us? Can we reconstruct fluctuations and trends on the Quandahar route in the seventeenth century?

First the extremes. Even though higher figures are mentioned, it seems highly probable that the activity of the second decade of the seventeenth century represented a high point in the history of the Quandahar route with 12–14,000 camels a year corresponding roughly to 3,000–3,500 shipping tons. On the other hand, we have no reason to believe that the caravan route was abandoned permanently, even though in certain years war may have restricted the trade to a minimum.

The boom of the early seventeenth century was caused by unsafe conditions on the closest alternative route by way of Hormuz during the wars between the Portuguese Estado, Persia

and the Mugal Empire, but the commodities of greatest importance—Lahore indigo and cottons from Central and South India—prove that the route was more than an emergency substitute. We have reasons to believe that its development in the preceding period was caused more by cheap silver in the West than by cheap commodities in the East.

After the fall of Hormuz, the caravan route remained a true alternative to the shipping route or shipping routes, the cost of transport was not prohibitive when high quality products were concerned. Nevertheless I find it significant that sugar disappears among the commodities mentioned on the caravan route and that references to indigo become rare. Also the subvention of the Surat export merchants is significant. Tavernier only mentions high quality cotton materials and silver as important commodities transported along the caravan route. The detour bypassing Multan and linking the Quandahar route with the Kabul route may have been preferred by the merchants, because Kabul offered an alternative market in a period when the overland trade to Persia had become less attractive. This chronology in broad out lines corresponds to the chronology of the Mughal coinage described by Moosvi.

What happened in the late seventeenth century and during the eighteenth century is practically unknown, though research in the company records from Persia may provide the answer. Judging from data from Surat, Indian exports to Persia were declining in the last years of the century, and the shipping figures for Surat - Bandar Abbas from the first decades of the eighteenth century are definitely at a level below those recorded in the middle of the seventeenth century. But it is most unlikely that this development resulted from a revitalization of the caravan route, decreasing demand in the Persian and Turkish markets is a more likely hypothesis.

The Quandahar route was one among many expanding trades in the long sixteenth century and one of the most remarkable examples that the economic expansion of that century was not a question of guns and sails only.

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MAPPING OF HISTORICAL ROUTE NETWORK THROUGH TRAVELOGUES : APPLICATION OF DCNC METHODOLOGY SIRHIND TO DELHI 1550s-1850s A.D.

USHA M LUTHER

TRAVELOGUES provide useful information base for comprehending the growth, development and expansion of historical route network of a specific region, in a specified period frame. The term 'travelogue', in the present paper, refers to journeys undertaken by rulers, army commanders, traders and surveyors. This study, based on thirty primary sources, focuses on projecting dimensional characteristics of DCNC' sectional route channels *vis a vis* nodal route channels linking Sirhind and Delhi in two period-specific categories (PSC) from 1550s to 1850s A.D.

A DCNC sectional route channel is a link connecting more than two route nodes in any section of the network. This type of channel indication permits incorporation of data from those travelogues which do not contain adequate reference of stage points. In contrast to this, a DCNC nodal route channel specifies the link between not more than two route nodes.

The DCNC count method used for the sectional route channel is called sectional-channel-tabulated-count (DCNC-sctc) and for the nodal channel is named nodal-channel-simple-count (DCNC-ncsc). Application of these count methods leads to determination of the source reference scale used for finalizing structural variations of sectional and nodal route channels separately. This helps in profile projection of route channels separately. This helps in profile projection of route network in its distinct developmental phases. The present paper reckons two phases of route development from Sirhind to Delhi *i.e.* from 1550s to 1800s A.D. and 1550s to 1850s A.D. These are marked as PSC I and PSC II on maps 1 & 2. Data obtained from travelogues, constitutes PSC source references (SR) for DCNC calculations and tabulations.

From Sirhind to Delhi, the network in the first period-specific category comprises three nodes, in addition to two keynodes Sirhind and Delhi. These are Ambala, Patiala and Thanesar. It has six nodal route channels (NRC) with seventeen stages and two sectional route channels (SRC). See Map 1.

NODAL ROUTE CHANNELS (PSC I)

1. Sirhind-Ambala (8 SR: AN, Fin, PN, AS, Tav, ALN & TJK)
2. Sirhind-Patiala (1 SR: AN)
3. Patiala-Ambala (1 SR: AN)

4. Patiala-Thanesar (1 SR: AN)
5. Ambala-Thanesar (6 SR: AN, Fin, SN, ALN, TJK & TAS)
6. Thanesar-Delhi (8 SR: SAR, AN, Tuz, Fin, Tav, ALN, TJK & TAS)
7. Rohtak-Delhi, Stage to node channel (2 SR: TA, TAS)

SECTIONAL ROUTE CHANNELS (PSC I)

1. Sirhind-Delhi (12 SR: additional SR are BAMA, IJ, MT & TAZ)
2. Thanesar-Delhi (9 SR: additional SR is TBS)

SOURCE REFERENCES (PSC I)

Seventeen sources have been used for this study, such as *Akbarnama* (AN), NRC 1,2,3,4,5,6; *Alamgirnama* (ALN), NRC 5,6; *Amal-i-Saleh* (AS), NRC 1; *Bahr-al-Asrar fi Manqib al-Akhyar* (BAMA), SRC 1; *Iqbalnama-i-Jahangiri* (IJ), SRC 1; *Muntakhab-al-Tawarikh* (NT), SRC 1; *Padshahnama* (PN), NRC 1; *Sidi Ali Reis Mirat ul Memalik* (SAR), NRC 6; *Shahjahan Nama* (SN), NRC 1, 5; *Tarikh-i-Akbari* (TA), NRC 7; *Tarikh-i-Alamgir Sani* (TAS), NRC 1; *Tazkirat-al-Ahwal* (Taz), NRC 1,5,6; *Tarikh-i-shah Alam Bahadur Shah* (TBS), SRC 2; *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* (Tuz), NRC 6; William Finch's Travels (Fin), NRC 1,5,6; J.B. Tavernier's Routes-Map (Tav), NRC 1,6.²

The two maps attached to this paper illustrate the dimensional characteristics of the nodal and sectional route channels by line type and thickness. Outer lines enclosing channels depict sectional route channels. Stage names on these channels have not been shown.³ The nodal projections are related to the DCNC sectional channel tabulated count. Hence, the size of keynodes Sirhind and Delhi is relatively larger than that of other route nodes in Map 2.

In PSC II (1550s-1850s A.D.), the Sirhind-Delhi route network consists of eight route nodes *i.e.*, Ambala, Gohana, Jind, Karnal, Panipat, Patiala, Sonapat and Thanesar in addition to Sirhind and Delhi. It has fifteen nodal route channels with 74 stages and one sectional route channel.

NODAL ROUTE CHANNELS (PSC II)

1. Sirhind-Ambala (15 SR: add. tick, Ger, Och, SW, Oliv, ML & Jacq)
2. Sirhind-Patiala (2 SR: add. Lloyd)
3. Patiala-Ambala (2 SR: add. Och)
4. Patiala-Thanesar (3 SR: add. Tick & SW)
5. Ambala-Thanesar (12 SR: add. Tick, Ger, SW, Oliv, Jacq & Barr)
6. Thanesar-Karnal (9 SR: Tick, Elph, Ger, SW, Oliv, Lloyd, Jacq, ML & Barr)

7. Jind-Karnal *via* Kaithal (i) (2 SR: Hodg & SW)
8. Jind-Karnal (ii) (2 SR: Arn & Waugh)
9. Jind-Gohana (1 SR: SW)
10. Gohana-Panipat (1 SR: SW)
11. Gohana-Sonepat (1 SR: SW)
12. Gohana-Delhi (1 SR: SW)
13. Karnal-Panipat (5 SR: Tick, Elph, Lloyd, ML & Jacq)
14. Panipat-Sonepat (5 SR: Tick, Elph, Lloyd, ML & Jacq)
15. Sonepat-Delhi (6 SR: Tick, SW, Arn, Lloyd, ML & Waugh)

SECTIONAL ROUTE CHANNEL (PSC II)

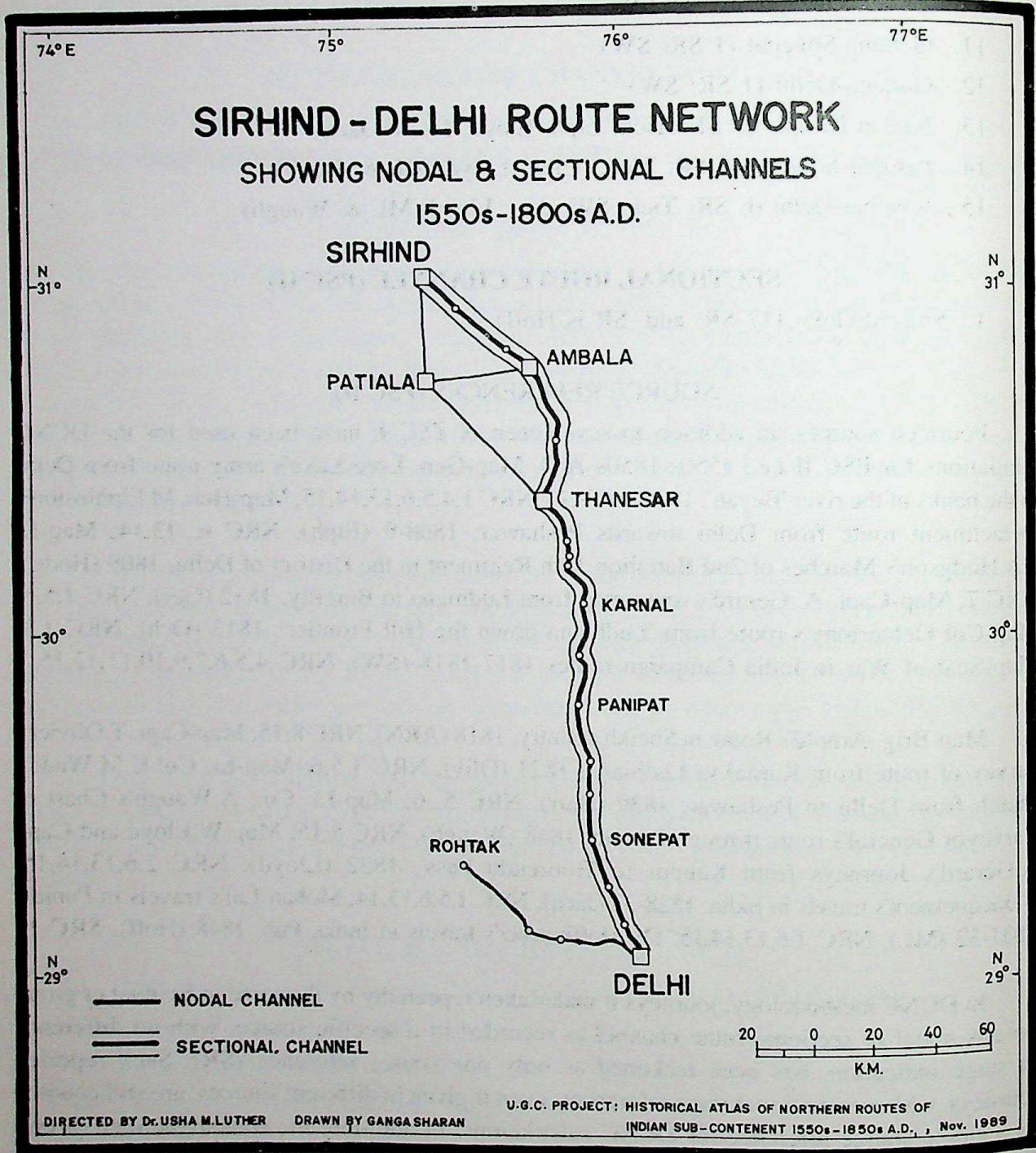
1. Sirhind-Delhi (17 SR: add. SR is Hoff)

SOURCE REFERENCES (PSC II)

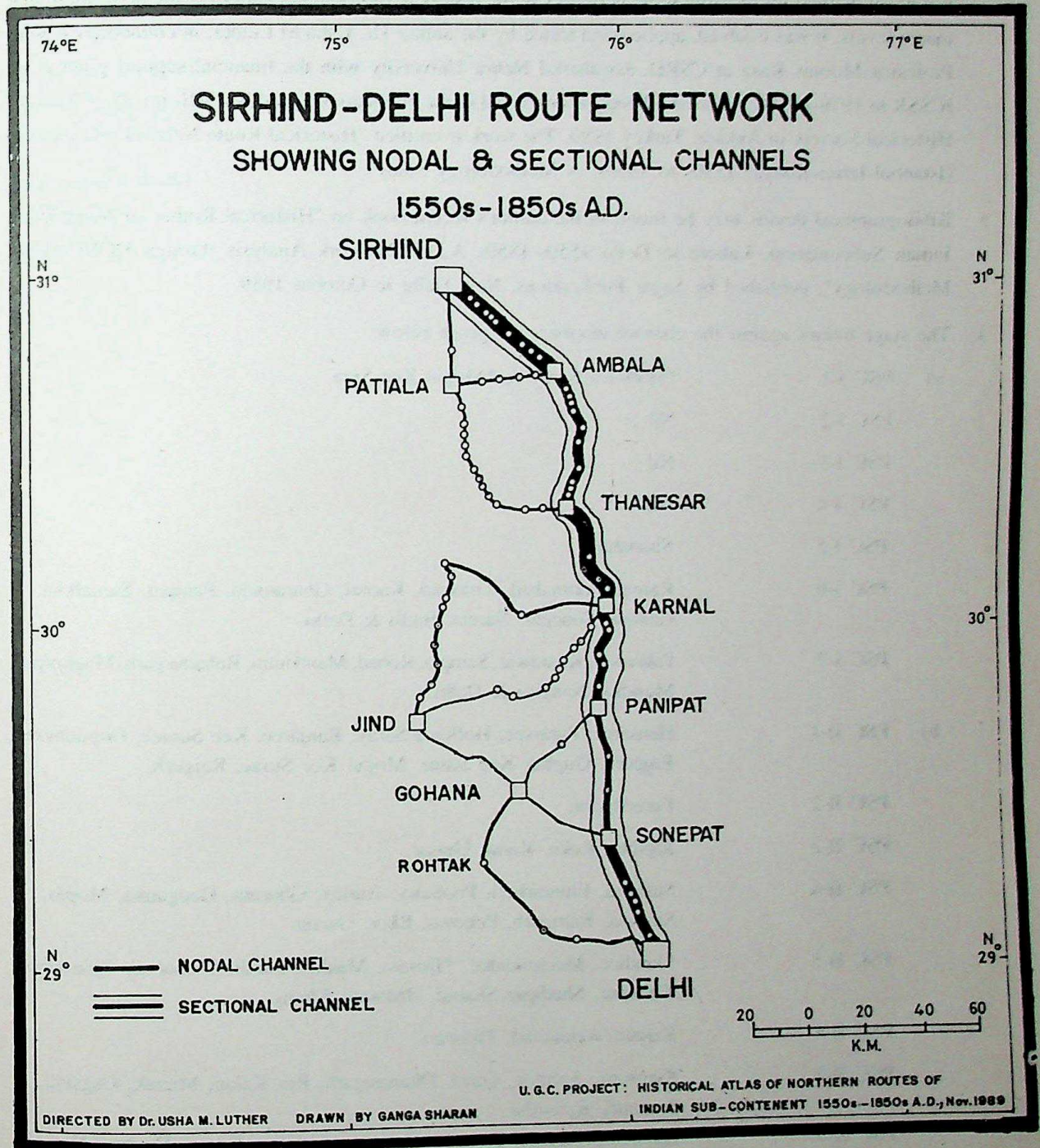
Fourteen sources, in addition to seventeen of PSC I, have been used for the DCNC tabulations for PSC II *i.e.*, 1550s-1850s A.D. Map-Gen. Lord Lake's army route from Delhi to the banks of the river 'Beyah', 1805-6 (Tick), NRC 1,4,5,6,13,14,15; Map-Hon. M.Elphinston's Detachment route from Delhi towards Peshawar, 1808-9 (Elph), NRC 6, 13,14; Map-Lt J.A.Hodgson's Marches of 2nd Battalion 10th Regiment in the District of Delhi, 1809 (Hodg), NRC 7; Map-Capt. A. Gerard's route map from Ludhiana to Bareilly, 1812 (Ger), NRC 1,5,6; Map-Col Ochterlony's route from 'Ludhiana down the Hill Frontier', 1813 (Och), NRC 1,3; Map-Seat of War in India Campaign routes 1817-1818 (SW), NRC 4,5,6,7,9,10,11,12,15.

Map-Brig. Arnold's Route in Sheikh country, 1818 (ARN), NRC 8,15; Map-Capt. T.Olivier's survey of route from Karnal to Ludhiana, 1821 (Oliv), NRC 1,5,6; Map-Lt. Col C.M.Wade's march from Delhi to Peshawar, 1839 (Barr), NRC 5, 6; Map-Lt. Co.. A.Waugh's Chart of Surveyor General's route through Punjab, 1848 (Waugh), NRC 8,15; Maj. W.Lloyd and Capt. A.Gerard's Journeys from Kanpur to 'Boorendo Pass', 1822 (Lloyd), NRC 2,6,13,14,15; V.Jacquemont's travels in India, 1828-32 (Jacq), NRC 1,5,6,13,14; Mohan Lal's travels in Punjab, 1831-32 (ML), NRC 1,6,13,14,15; Dr. Hoffmeister's travels in India, Pub. 1848 (Hoff), SRC 1.

In DCNC methodology, journeys if undertaken repeatedly by the same individual or group on any nodal or sectional route channel as recorded in a specific source, with no difference in stage indication, has been reckoned as only one source reference (SR). Such repeated journeys, without additional stage references, even if given in different sources, are still counted as a single source reference for DCNC calculations. In addition, the travelogue-data throws light on the channel use frequency *vis a vis* the politico-economic historical developments of a specific region. Therefore, we may safely conclude that mapping of historical routes with application of DCNC methodology is not possible without the use of travelogues.



MAP No.1



MAP No. 2

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1. The methodology entitled 'Dimensional Categorization of Network Components' abbreviated as DCNC, is a novel method for charting route networks in the historical dimensional pattern at the both micro and macro levels. It was evolved, applied and tested by the author Dr. Usha M Luther, in collaboration with Professor Moonis Raza at CSRD, Jawaharlal Nehru University with the financial support granted by ICSSR in 1979-80. DCNC methodology is described in the publication Serial No. VII- no. 95 of Turkish Historical Society in Ankara, Turkey 1989. The work is entitled "Historical Route Network of Anatolia (Istanbul-Izmir-Konya) 1550s to 1850s; A Methodology Study".
2. Bibliographical details may be found in the author's recent book on "Historical Routes of North West Indian Subcontinent, Lahore to Delhi 1550s-1850s A.D. : Network Analysis through DCNC-micro Methodology", published by Sagar Publications, New Delhi in October 1989.
3. The stage names against the channel numbers are given below:

a)	PSC I-1	*Hollowa Saray & *Mogul Kee Sura.
	PSC I-2	Nil
	PSC I-3	Nil
	PSC I-4	Nil
	PSC I-5	Shahabad.
	PSC I-6	Raipur, Azimabad, Tirawari, Karnal, Gharaunda, Panipat, Samalkha, Ganaur, Sonapat, Narela, Badli & Delhi.
	PSC I-7	Pahrawar, Kharawar, Sampla, Rohad, Mandautni, Bahadurgarh, Magholpur, Mundka, Nangloi & Delhi.
b)	PSC II-1	Hansaree, Putarsee, Hollowa Saray, Banjaree, Kee Surace, Oopudheree, Rajpura, Gughur Kee Surae, Mogul Kee Surae, Rajgurh.
	PSC II-2	Fureedpoor.
	PSC II-3	Jogipur, Roke, Kami, Untsar.
	PSC II-4	Suffaira, Bhunarheri, Poonairy, Burley, Ghuram, Doogauna, Mopar, Susaina, Ramgarh, Pehowa, Bhor, Gurrur.
	PSC II-5	*Jandlee, Muchoundee, *Durara, Mauhri, Landi, Shahabad, Chinarthal, Khanpur, Shadipur Shahid, Bhawani Khera.
	PSC II-6	Raipur, Azimabad, Tirawari.
	PSC II-7	Singhana, Safidon, Qawi, Dharamgarh, Rer Kalan, Munak, Gagsina, Sitaundi, Barautha.
	PSC II-8	Kandela, Nikuran, Shamdu, Kathana, Guliana, Kasan, Deoban, Harsola, Kaithal, Dachar.
	PSC II-9	Nil

PSC II-10	Israna.
PSC II-11	Nil
PSC II-12	Rohtak, Mandautni, Bahadurgarh.
PSC II-13	Chaura, Kutail, Gharaunda, Kaimla, Nizampur.
PSC II-14	Samalkha, Ganaur.
PSC II-15	Narela, Holambi, Alipur, Shumnapur, Azadpur.

*Interpolated stages.

BENGAL ECONOMY VIEWED IN THE LIGHT OF TOME PIRES' OBSERVATIONS

M. R. TARAFDAR

MEDIEVAL Bengal poems and foreign traveller's accounts give us the impression that in the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries Bengal was prosperous – her seaborne trade and 'a diverse mix of her industrial products were responsible for her prosperity. But the hypothesis has never been examined in depth. We shall examine in this paper aspects of Bengal economy, particularly Bengal's trade and commerce, in the light of Tome Pires' observations, keeping in view the general impact of medieval Indian polity and administration which were intimately linked with the agrarian economy of the time. Such variables as trade, craft-production and money economy may not be adequate to explain fully the economic situation, unless these elements are related to the agriculture-based administrative system and polity of the country. While reviewing the commercial activities carried on by Bengali and foreign merchants in the sixteenth century we have considered the *Suma Oriental*¹ of Tome Pires as an indispensable source of information. We get in this work the first comprehensive account of Asian trade, as it was, at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

Tome Pires completed the *Suma Oriental* in Malacca between 1512 and 1515, when the Portuguese had laid the foundations of their maritime empire stretching from the east African coast to the Chinese seas. But considering the limited commercial and human resources they possessed at that time their impact on Asian economy and society can be presumed to have been very negligible. Tome Pires must have built up the picture of the traditional world of Asian trade and society as it obtained in the pre-colonial period. As a Writer and Accountant of the Portuguese factory in Malacca he had access to the valuable Portuguese reports necessary for preparing an account of their commercial activities in Asia in addition to his "direct touch with the cosmopolitan world of oriental travellers, ships' captains and merchants..."², Like many other countries Bengal occupies a peripheral position in his account, the central one being reserved for Malacca, then the most important centre of trade and commerce in South-East Asia. In fact, Pires intends to give a detailed account of Indian trade relations with South-East Asian ports among which Malacca occupied a formidable position. But the account of Bengal that we come across in the *Suma Oriental*, gives us the most vivid impression about her position on this east-west trade line extending from Indonesia to Western Asia.

Tome Pires came to Asia with his experience of western, late medieval economy and society. In his account of Bengal he has mentioned the peculiarities of the institution of kingship highlighting the position of the Abyssinian nobles. Looked upon as 'knights'³ these nobles constituted a political elite that enjoyed a very influential position in the society. Although Pires does not give further details about the Abyssinian nobility we think that he had in his mind the West European feudal system. Even if we do not want to detect in the position

of this nobility an element of European feudalism, supposed to have been construed by Pires, we have adequate reasons to link it with the agrarian economy of Bengal. The nobles used to enjoy territorial assignments according to their respective positions in the administrative hierarchy. As we shall see later, this form of agrarian economy and administration nourishing the polity of the time, were working as a damper on commercial enterprise. But neither this agrarian economy nor the polity based on it were the immediate concerns of Pires. He was, in fact, looking at Asian things and Asian situations as representative of a rising mercantile community having keen interest in commodities and whatever was of relevance for trade and commerce.

Consequently, one could find in Bengal various foreigners such as Arabs, Parsees, Turks and Abyssinians and also merchants from Chaul-Dabhol and Goa. Trading voyages were conducted in several stages. Those merchants had organised themselves into companies in Calicut on the Malabar coast and they did the same in Bengal. Every year four or five ships left for Malacca and Pasai. These ships were of two kinds, viz. dhows or the fast and light vessels similar to those found on the west Indian or Arabian coast and the heavier type of large ships or junks. At least one or two big ships came every year to Malacca carrying commodities worth 80,000 to 90,000 *cruzados*. We are told that merchants from Bengal used to take with them twenty varieties of cotton cloth, steel, very rich bed canopies with beautiful cut cloth-work in different colours, wall furnishings like tapestry and fruit preserves of various kinds including myrobolans, ginger, oranges, cucumbers, carrots, grapes, lemons, quinces, figs, pumpkins, Indian gourds, and many other fruits, some of them kept in vinegar. The exports included strongly scented clay vases in dark colour which the people of Malacca valued highly. Tome Pires noticed that Bengal cloth was in a great demand all over South-East Asia and it used to sell at a high price in Malacca. Countries like Burma, Borneo, Java and the Liu Kin islands needed this cloth very much. The commodities which were brought from Malacca included Borneo camphor, pepper, cloves, mace, nutmeg, sandal wood, silk, seed-pearls, porcelain, copper, tin, lead, quicksilver, white and green damasks, *enrolados* from China, caps of scarlet-in-grain, carpets and krisses and swords from Java.⁴ The list of exports and imports show that the things brought to Bengal were mostly luxury goods and that the exports included food and other necessities, some of them having, of course, an element of luxury.

Besides Malacca Bengal had trade relations with Arakan, Pegu, Siam, Pasai and Pedir in North Sumatra, Banda, Papua, Aru and the Liu Kin islands. In the west, Bengal traded with Ceylon, Cambay, Maldives, Ormuz and Aden. Ships fitted out from Bengal in February took thirty days to reach Malacca. Starting from Malacca in the beginning of August they could reach Bengal within a similar period of time.⁵

Trade between Bengal and Malacca was very profitable. Merchants could earn a profit of 250% to 300% on each item after paying import duties of about 36% in Bengal and an export tax of 6% in Malacca. It was possible to earn a good profit out of the difference between the

price of gold and silver that obtained in Malacca and Bengal. In Bengal gold was priced 1/6th more than in Malacca and silver was worth 1/5th or 1/4th less than in Malacca. Bengali merchants used their own currency in Malacca and brought back foreign currency out of which they made a good profit. By importing cowries, which served as a medium of exchange, they could make profit.⁶

We have seen that the exports of Bengal included twenty varieties of cotton fabrics four of which have been mentioned by their specific names such as *sinabafos*, *chautares*, *beatilhas* and *beirames*. These have been duly identified by Professor Irfan Habib with certain varieties of muslins⁷. Many more varieties of textile goods are mentioned in the accounts of Varthema, Barbosa, Ma Huan and others.⁸ Sericulture or rearing of the mulberry silk-worm was practised in Bengal⁹ and we are told by Barbosa that the Gujarati silk-weaving industry was largely dependent on raw silk supplied from Bengal.¹⁰ Pires includes neither this item nor rice in the list of commodities exported from Bengal. He has incidentally mentioned the latter in connection with Aden's imports.¹¹ Bengal had long distance trade in sugar¹² about which Pires is silent. Moreover, he does not speak about the technical devices which used to expedite the production of handicrafts.

These deficiencies are largely compensated by the account of coinage and weighing balance that we come across in the *Suma Oriental*. The system of counting cowries mentioned by Pires gives us the rate at which the Bengal silver coin and the Malaccan *calaim* were equated with those sea-shells.¹³

Of the ports and towns facilitating the seaborne trade of Bengal the city of Bengal and Satgaon find special mention in the *Suma Oriental*. The former, probably identical with Gaur and situated on the Ganges had the king's residence and forty thousand people and "lay two day's journey up the river ..." Satgaon functioning as a good, navigable port, had ten thousand inhabitants and many merchants. "These are the chief trading cities in Bengal. There are others inland, but they are strongly fortified garrison towns, of no commercial importance, and their is constant war in the interior".¹⁴ Pires was probably projecting his ideas about the North Indian and Central Asian cities which possessed fortifications clearly demarcating them from the adjoining rural settlements. But the inland towns of Bengal did not have fortifications. They possessed mints and also residences of governors and receivers of customs and revenues.¹⁵ Communicating as they did along river routes with some of the important ports and towns, they had at least a subsidiary role in the commercial life of the country.

Thus we have a very detailed and somewhat illuminating account of Bengal's seaborne trade as it was at the beginning of the sixteenth century. It is quite for sometime that the circulation of gold and silver coins and cowries had led to the growth of a money economy in the country. The cash nexus, which had perhaps linked up different professional groups, could

function somewhat effectively. For, it was sustained by a favourable balance of trade caused by a variety of marketable commodities and facilitating the import of the precious metals. The *Suma Oriental* is very informative about how gold, silver and cowries were coming to this country. Cowries used to come from Maldivies in exchange of Bengal rice¹⁶. Gold and silver were imported from China and some countries of South-East Asia with which Bengal had trade relations. We are also told that some amount of silver reached Bengal from Siam through Pegu¹⁷. The metallic currency of this country, which had the function to facilitate exchange at commercial levels, was completely dependent on the precious metals and cowries brought from abroad. But the money economy in question was also based on foreign trade fed by exports including cotton textiles of considerable varieties.

Naturally one may ask if the expansion of the maritime trade, and the process of commodity production connected with it could bring about any significant change in the socio-economic life of Bengal. In fact, similar questions have been raised in a recently published paper by Dr. Arun Dasgupta, who, however, thinks that an attempt to answer them, is beyond the scope of his paper¹⁸. Before we try to find answers to questions like this it is necessary to find out what position the Bengali merchants used to hold in international trade in relation to the other merchants. The *Suma Oriental* contains significant material about the respective positions of the merchants of several countries in the sphere of Asian trade. About this time shipping and trade in the western half of the Indian Ocean were controlled by the Arabs and the Gujaratis, while the maritime traffic between Gujarat and Malacca "was almost exclusively in Gujarati hands"¹⁹. Because of Gujarati importance in this international trade, the Gujarati merchants in Malacca had a *shah-i-bandar* to look after their commercial affairs.²⁰ Commenting on the importance of these merchants in Asian trade Pearson writes, ".... the most important merchants on all these 'international' routes, with only two exceptions, were Gujaratis carrying not only their own cloth, indigo, and opium, but also the goods of others, especially spices."²¹ If capital, shipping and commodities including varieties of textile goods are taken into consideration, the position of the Coromandel merchants was very strong in this trade system.²² But the Bengali merchants, when compared with their Gujarati and Coromandel counterparts, seem to have held a very precarious position. Tome Pires holds, "The Bengalees are great merchants and very independent, brought up to trade. They are domestic. All the merchants are false..... When they want to insult a man they call him a Bengalee. They are very treacherous, they are sharp-witted."²³

We are told by the same authority that shipbuilding and shipping were mostly in the hands of the Gujarati and the Coromandel merchants²⁴ who must have accordingly controlled navigation and trade in Bengal ports and also at the trade centres of the Malay-Indonesian archipelago. Tome Pires does not at all refer to the Bengali merchants' control over these means of production. In Malacca the Bengalis were grouped together with the merchants from Coromandel, Pegu and Pasai under a *shah-i-Bandar*.²⁵ They earned their living as fishermen and artisans and "probably formed the crews of the ships which came to Malacca." But they were "in no way comparable with the powerful south Indian personages from Coromandel"²⁶ Some Bengali

merchants were found also in Pasai, Java and Siam. But all this does not point to their importance in Indian and South-East Asian trade. The poor image of the Bengalis in foreign countries, their lack of commercial organisations as well as of the technological skill needed for shipping and shipbuilding activities and the low level of their business ethics, as indicated by Pires, must have made them incapable of competing with the Gujarati and Coromandel merchants. It seems that they were participating in commercial activities as junior partners of these merchants. Under these circumstances capital formation centring round trade and commerce and the consequent growth of a commercialised elite group in Bengal must have been impossible. In fact, medieval Bengali literature and foreign accounts of the time hardly indicate about the existence of a commerce-based middle class in the Bengali society. The respectable moors of the city of Bengal, whose luxurious and expensive life-style has been vividly depicted by Barbosa,²⁷ were probably identical with the West Indian, Arab, Persian and Turkish merchants living in Bengal in connection with trade.²⁸ The "false" merchants, noticed by Pires, were probably a body of speculators and pedlars that grew in the course of the international trade. Long distance trade in Asia was dominated by the Arab, Gujarati, Coromandel and Chinese merchants.²⁹

Domestic industry, which formed a sector of considerable importance, was probably controlled by merchant capital and had hardly any scope for independent growth. The professional classes of artisans and craftsmen were placed very low in the social hierarchy as found in the *Brahaddharma* and *Brahmavaivarta* puranas.³⁰ Their positions in the society indicate that they lived at the level of bare subsistence. Placed within the limits of the *varna* system and tied by caste regulations, small groups of merchants and artisans, who could feed only local markets, were going through a process of professional stagnation. At least they were not expected to have an impact on the seaborne trade.

The working of the administrative system, which was based on the agricultural surplus, seems to have checked the process of capital formation as well as the growth of a stable mercantile class which was inseparably connected with that process. As we know, control over land was quite crucial for the administrative structure that obtained in the medieval Indian states. Through the mechanism of the *iqta* or *jagir* system, which provided for maximum centralization giving the rulers almost absolute power over society. Muslim administrators could appropriate to themselves a great share of the agrarian surplus³¹ on which the ruling hierarchy was based. As the whole ethos of the political system was inseparably linked with land, it could hardly find much justification in seeking its nourishment from maritime trade and commerce. The agriculture-oriented economy and the spirit of landbound inwardness it had generated among the rulers, are probably the factors which can satisfactorily explain their alertness to the working of the land system and their comparative lack of interest in what was happening on the sea. The Sultans of Delhi and their successors, the great Mughals, did not have any provision in their legal system for control of the sea, nor could they evolve a total economic policy to regulate uniformly the activities of the peasant and the merchant. The

dichotomy that grew out of the differing moods of the medieval Indian polity, totally based on the agricultural surplus, and the mercantile economy, must have significantly affected the process of capital formation. The dichotomy probably found expression through the Bengal sultan's attitude to merchants. Tome Pires was told by the Bengali merchants that Sultan Husain Shah was "not benevolent to the merchants" so that many of them were going to other countries.³² The prevailing method of collection of taxes and customs dues probably corresponded to this attitude. Tome Pires writes, "They say that ten or twelve people collected the dues, each one his own, and they are the officials for this and that when they take their tithe they wrong the merchants and tyrannise over them openly."³³

In addition to this extortionate method of tax collection there was also the excessive rate of more than 36% of dues imposed on each item of import.

In summing up the above discussion we may note the following: the weak position of the Bengali merchants in maritime trade, the control exercised by the West Asian, Gujarati and Coromandel merchants on commercial organisations and other means of production and the unfavourable disposition towards commercial activities as demonstrated by the medieval Muslim polity thoroughly based on the land system of the time, seem to have worked as deterrents to the process of capital formation. The predominantly agrarian pattern of economy, that formed the basis of the medieval Indian polity, probably continued to dominate life in Bengal.

How do we then explain the monetary system, the existence of ports and commerce and the continuity in craft-production? These factors constituted indispensable variables in the economic formation in Bengal during the period in question. These elements were present in Bengal economy even in the earlier period when there was no expansion of trade. What happened in Bengal in the period from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century was the growth of a number of towns and ports, a considerable expansion in craft production and also a corresponding expansion in commercial activities. In assessing this remarkable economic situation it is perhaps necessary to take into consideration the significant changes that had taken place along the entire course of the maritime commerce of Asia. After the destruction of the Abbasid Khilafat in 1258 A.D. the diversion of the traditional trade route from the Persian Gulf area to the Alexandria-Aden-Cambay line had far reaching consequences. As a result of this shifting of the trade route Malacca in the east and Cambay in the west gained adequate importance and the Gujarati and Coromandel mercantile communities became important factors in international trade.³⁴ The diversion of the trade route, as noticed above, the increasing demand for South-East Asian spices in Europe, which expedited the production of industrial goods in the coastal regions of the sub-continent and also the role of the Arab-Chinese merchants in this period were perhaps directly responsible for the revival of trade and the growth of urban centres, industry and money economy, which followed it as component elements in the new situation. But we have already indicated that merely craft-production and the

role of money economy and urban centres could hardly alter the agrarian base of the country's economy. Formation of commercial and industrial capital could have minimised the dependence of this region on agriculture leading to the growth of a stable commercial middle class. But no signs of such a social transformation were visible.³⁵

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11. Pires, *op.cit.*, I, p.17.
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16. *Ibid.* p.105, Wang Ta-yuan's account (1349-50 A.D.) in W.W. Rockhill, "Notes on the Relations and Trade of China with the Eastern Archipelago and the Coast of the Indian Ocean during the Fourteenth Century," *Tong Pao* July, 1915, p. 388.
17. Pires, I, p.100; M.R. Tarafdar, "Trade and Society in Early Medieval Bengal," *Indian Historical Review*, IV(1978), No.2; p. 278.
18. *Op. cit.*, p 154.

19. M.A.P. Meilink-Roelofs, *Asian Trade and European Influence in the Indonesian Archipelago between 1500 and about 1600 A.D.* (The Hague, 1962), p. 62; Pearson, *op.cit.* p. 100.
20. Pires, II, p. 265
21. *Op.cit.*, 10.
22. Pires has emphasised the significant role of the Coromandel merchants in Malacca's trade. These merchants possessed many big ships and all sorts of merchandise needed to be fully engaged in commerce in South-East Asia. Every year three or four ships sailed from the Coromandel coast to Malacca, each of them fitted with commodities worth about 12,000 to 15,000 *cruzados*. In addition to these ships one or two large ships sailed from Pulicat each of which was valued 80,000 to 90,000 *cruzados*. The commodities of the ships from Pulicat consisted entirely of thirty varieties of cloth including several expensive fabrics. The Coromandel merchants included many wholesalers and had adequate capital, stocks of merchandise and shipping assets; Pires, I, pp 255, 272, Meilink-Roelofs, pp 66-67.
23. *Ibid* I, pp. 88, 93.
24. For the usefulness of the Gujarati ships and the institutional and social organisations of the Gujarati merchants see Meilink-Roelofs, p. 61; Person, pp. 8., 25-27, 104-108. Four ships used to go from Gujarat to Malacca. Each one of them possessed merchandise worth 15,000 to 30,000 *cruzados*. Besides these ships one large ship was fitted out from the port of Cambay carrying commodities worth 70,000 to 80,000 *cruzados*; Pires, II, pp. 269-70. The ports of Gujarat were so advantageously located that it was possible for the merchants of the country to have direct communications with Hormuz and Aden in the West and Malacca in the East and to maintain effective control over the main trade routes of Asia.
25. Pires, II, p. 165.
26. *Ibid.* I, p. 93; Meilink-Roelofs, "Trade and Islam in the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago" in D.S. Richards (ed) *Islam and Trade of Asia* (Oxford, 1970), p. 144.
27. *Op.cit.*, II, 147-48.
28. Pires, I, p. 88.
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31. Irfan Habib, "Economic History of the Delhi Sultanate—An Essay in Interpretation", *Indian Historical Review*, IV(1978), No. 2, p. 291.
32. *Op.cit.* i, pp. 95.

33. *Ibid.* p. 95. Two other pieces of information supplied by Pires, need mention in this connection; for they may have some bearing on Bengal's sea-borne trade. We are told that the first Muslim Kingdom in Pasai in Northern Sumatra was founded by the Bengalis by the middle of the fourteenth century and that the rulers of Aden, Hormuz, Cambay and Bengal sent letters and presents to the Sultan of Malacca and also a number of merchants to live there in the early fifteenth century. The tradition about the foundation of a Muslim kingdom in North Sumatra laid by the Bengalis arose out of myths; for such a phenomenon seems sociologically impossible. No Bengali-speaking political or mercantile elite did exist in Bengal or elsewhere in the fourteenth century. Who could then reach North Sumatra to lay the foundation of the said kingdom? The incident of sending merchants and presents to Malacca by the Muslim rulers had some diplomatic significance. For these were intended to felicitate the Malaccan ruler on the occasion of his victory over a neighbouring state. All this does not seem to have connection with trade relations.
34. Sehricke, *Indonesian Sociological Studies*, pt. II (The Hague and Bandung, 1957) p. 15; Arun Dasgupta, *op.cit.*, 143-44; Tarafdar, "Trade and Society..." *Indian Historical Review*, IV, 2, pp. 285-86.
35. While discussing this paper B.N. Mukherjee spoke about the existence of urban centres and money economy that facilitated trade in early medieval period. We do not have doubts about the continuity of trade. But one could perhaps notice intense commercial activities in the period with which we are concerned. Such a situation was created by a number of significant changes in the world of international trade, which we have mentioned in the concluding section of this paper. Mukherjee also asserted that Indian rulers including the Husainshahi Sultans of Bengal, used to encourage trade. It may be difficult to substantiate this contention. We have referred to Husain Shah's unsympathetic attitude to the merchants, as indicated by Tome Pires. Husain's son Ghiyath al-Din Mahmud allowed the Portuguese to control the customs of Chittagong and Satgaon, build factories at those places and collect revenues from the adjoining regions. All this shows that the Sultan was hardly conscious about the commercial importance of those ports. In fact, medieval Indian polity was mainly dependent on agrarian economy for its sustenance. The rulers were, of course, concerned with the collection of customs from the merchants. Finally, we have stated reasons in favour of the impressionistic view that even in the midst of intense commercial activities Bengal economy during the period in question, did not have for itself a stable process of capital formation.

OBSERVATIONS OF SOME NON - ENGLISH TRAVELLERS ON ROUTES OF LATE MEDIEVAL INDIA

ANIRUDDHA RAY

I

MODERN historians on Medieval India paid very little attention to route; perhaps because it falls within the discipline of Geography or Historical Geography—a kind of inter-disciplinary approach. This lacuna was partly rectified by Jean Deloche¹, who mapped the routes of the foreign travellers in India during the medieval period, which however does not show the development or disuse of routes due to various political and economic changes. A.K.M. Faroque's² study included other categories and did not take into account the changes occurring through time. Irfan Habib's mammoth atlas³ corelates the economic and political factors at a given point of time with routes as part of the regional scene. Yet the fundamental problem remains. The changes of routes, the opening of new ones or the disuse of old routes, are not related to the changes occurring in the regions. In this brief article we would also try to pose the problem of the difference in the perceptions of the non-English travellers. For our limited purpose, we would take up the examples from the 17th century with occasional references to those of the 18th.

Since the beginning of the 7th or rather at the end of the 16th century, European travellers, visiting India, had left accounts of the routes. Yet the description of the physical condition of the routes was over shadowed by the description of the conditions of travel. It is strange that the European travellers, coming straight from Europe to India, very rarely compared the Indian roads with those of Europe, while those who had come by overland through Persia and Turkey, had invariably compared the condition of travel in different Islamic countries. Obviously, they considered the "orient" as part of different civilisation and tried to find the differences existing within the same cultural block. Yet the travellers, excepting a few, did not try to cover the entire Mughal empire and perhaps justifiably concentrated on the northern plains, where the central political power was concentrated as well as the coastal areas of Western India where trade and commerce had led to the growth of cities and towns. Therefore, the accounts of the European travellers relate to certain regions. We would start with Bengal on which the European missionaries and Portuguese traders had left behind highly interesting accounts of the development of regions and emergence of new routes. Since the accounts of the English travellers are well known to the Indian literati, we would try to present here some of the observations of the non-English travellers and merchants, some of whom had left behind often contradictory and mistaken notions of the Indian Mughals⁴. Apart from the lack of accuracy of the information, the perception of the travellers, travelling within the same decade and in the same region, differ widely.

II

From the second decade of the 16th century, the Portuguese had started arriving in Bengal. Their accounts would show that the water way between the sea and the capital had remained undeveloped with practically no towns on the way⁵. The scene changed by the end of the 16th and early 17th century when we find the missionaries had established themselves in different towns of Bengal, while the routes through water had developed linking the different urban centres of Bengal.

By the end of the 16th century, political and economic changes in Bengal had made it different from that of the early 16th century. Bengal-Orissa wars, followed by the Mughal-Afghan wars had made the Saptagram-Gaur linkage weak and there was a migration to the eastern part of Bengal. This had resulted in the emergency of semi-independant zamindars (called Bara-Bhuyians) and efflorescence of trading towns under their leadership in the wake of any absence of effective central authority⁶. As a result, some of the well-beaten tracts had become out of use while new routes had developed linking these new centres of trade and political authority. The well-known tract between Saptagram and Gaur had fallen into decay as mentioned by the French traveller Vincent Le Blan⁷ and Ralph Fitch⁸. The desertion of the capital at Gaur, the decline of the well known port of Saptagram and the shifting of the Portuguese trade of Hughly, more towards the sea, created a new situation of economic enterprise, political power and new routes. The shifting of the political axis had become more pronounced towards the eastern sea-board, creating in its turn smaller centres like Sripur, Bakla, Chandecan, Sonargaon etc. Here the waterways go through the forests, with new cultivation on one side and jungles on the other side with tigers following the boats⁹. This kind of contradictory situation in the routes was created by the twin forces of new market demands with newly established production centres supported by the diffused and semi-independant political powers. Naturally the undeclared and unhealthy swamps affected the physic of even the sturdy Jesuit missionaries, although the travellers like Fitch or others were less affected due to their brief stay. While the missionaries extolled the virtues of living through danger, some of them dying in the process, the travellers looked at wonder to the "other" civilisation, the mystic orient with everpresent green foliage, docile inhabitants and wild beasts roaming at a distance. For the local Bengalees, the ever increasing danger of piracy by the armed and ruthless Arakanese and the Portuguese were far more real in the route than the romance of travel. It is no wonder, therefore, that the legendary Bengali merchant could not sleep for seven nights in his travel from Saptagram to the sea for fear of the "Harmadas"¹⁰.

Therefore, the routes of Bengal had undergone a change with the emergence of different political and economic situation. It was changed again due to the rise of Dacca and Tavernier¹¹, in his visit of 1666, had described the route which stood the test of time. He had the pleasure of shooting crocodiles enroute to Dacca. The absence of brick buildings on a large scale at Dacca shows it to be developing slowly perhaps due to the devastation and desolation caused by the frequent attacks of the Arakanese so vividly described by Sebastian Manrique¹².

III

In the Western part of India, despite the establishment of the Mughal authority, the challenges by the Marathas in the second half of the 17th century, made the situation fluid and some routes hazardous. Here the safety of the travellers varied and the facilities differed from place to place. Yet the new economic development and the long years of Mughal peace had developed the urban centres around which grew up the areas of production and trade.

Although the long distance routes were existing, yet these routes were not suited to wheeled traffic particularly beyond Patna in the east or Golconda in the south¹³. The crossing of the rivers, particularly after the monsoon, was hazardous since the banks were too steep and too high for the chariots. The journey of Thevenot in the 1660's from Surat to Baroda, a well-known route, had this inconvenience¹⁴. For safety, the passengers carried lances in view of the numerous robbers in the way and there was the absence of wells particularly after Broach.

Apart from such inconveniences, there were other problems of basic nature, although Tavernier concedes that the "...conveyances and manners of travelling... is not less convenient than all the arrangements for marching in comfort either in France or in Italy ..." ¹⁵ - a rare comparison with European conditions of travel. Most of the travellers safely herded together, used to take cooks with them who prepared food at the end of the day; but all of them did not. Tavernier however found that "in the large villages there is generally a Mussalman governor and there you find sheep, fowl and pigeons for sale; but in the places where there are only banians, you find only flour, rice, vegetables and milk..." ¹⁶. Echoing Tavernier and rather going against the opinion of Bernier and others, Francois Martin, making the same journey, as made by Thevenot and Tavernier, a few years later, dismissed these inconveniences. Using *Palkis* instead of chariots (actually bullock carts), he found well kept caravanserais on the road and in its absence, he was welcomed by the local faujdar (Muslim governor of Tavernier) possibly because he was an official of the newly found French East India Company rather than a simple unknown traveller¹⁷. Therefore, the experience of the travellers at the same period of time in respect of the same route, with the Marathas hovering belligerently in the background, was not the same. In a different period of time, about a century later, Charles Ware Malet's continuous travelling from Cambay to Broach, Surat and Ahmedabad in the 1770's showed that the condition had remained the same in the background of the Anglo-Maratha wars. He needed a pass from the Marathas to travel¹⁸ and the apparent immobility of the Indian situation remained.

In the 17th century this pass was of complex kind. Despite having a pass of the King of Golconda, Martin¹⁹ had to fight his way through innumerable zamindars through whose territories he had to travel, an experience that was shared by Thevenot²⁰ and Tavernier²¹ but not by Bernier. As Martin found out later that he had to get local passess to go through freely²² while Tavernier would manage a pass from Shaista Khan, which declared him to be a member

of his household²³. It may be that Thevenot or Bernier did not have the same experience as they did not have goods with them. As a result of this experience, Tavernier advised to take 20 or 30 armed men "some with bows and arrows and others with muskets". But he preferred "for greater show" to carry a flag as "is always done by the English and Dutch Companies...."²⁴.

It is interesting to note that while most of the travellers would complain of the robbers on the way, they were very rarely robbed. This may be due to the fact that they were travelling in big groups. Even then travellers, travelling alone like the Italian Careri, who went from Bijapur to Goa in 1695-96, were never robbed. Yet Careri stated that compared to travelling in Persia or Turkey, travelling through Mughal India was far more difficult, "for there are no beasts for carriages to be found nor caravanserais at convenient distances, nor provisions; and what is worse, there is no safety from thieves...."²⁵. While Thevenot recorded the theft on goods of a French Company official who got back the money on complaint to the Emperor Aurangzeb²⁶, Manucci was particularly careful in praising the serais in India²⁷. The two different perceptions and experiences of two travellers may be due to their two different perceptions and experiences of two travellers may be due to their two different periods of travel. This is attested by Careri who stated that the problems may be caused by the Maratha attacks. Even though he mentioned the thugs who became a menace in the later 18th and 19th centuries, we find only one traveller, Le Boulaye Le Gouz, was murdered near Dacca, whose trunk of books was mistaken as a trunk of treasure²⁸. With this, one should add that Tavernier had wandered all around India six times with jewels which he sold at fat profits to the rich Mughal nobles. Despite the wars, the discount in the hundis did not rise significantly excepting due to local exigencies²⁹. One reason may be that neither the Marathas nor the Mughals touched the merchants, who needed only to take the usual security steps so far as thieves are concerned. The problem of the security of routes, therefore, remained largely regional and varied from time to time due to political exigencies, which resulted differing experiences and perceptions. As stated earlier, the problem of the regionalisation of routes could be seen clearly in the travels of Thevenot and Martin in the 1660's and 1670's which was in a way tied up with the frame of work of political arrangements between the central government and the local powers—a system which the travellers realised only too late. One should note also that there was always a tussle between local autonomy and centralisation which the repeated Farmans of successive Mughal Emperors could not solve.

Due to the regionalisation of the routes and the varying political situations, the perception of routes varied with the different travellers having similar experiences in other parts of the 'orient'. Thevenot, in the 1660's had described how he could not get either a palanquin or a chariot to go from Golconda to Masuloptam, the biggest port of the kingdom. He had to hire a horse and had to wait for the company of merchants³⁰. This was not the experience of two other travellers. Tavernier, about the same time, complained of the lack of chariots because of the "many narrow and difficult passes", but he had found "much larger palanqueen than in the rest of India"³¹. About a decade later than Thevenot, Francois Martin found the route 'well-trodden, full of small market towns and villages.... everything abundant...."³². It may be

that the overflowing of river had prevented Thevenot from getting any effective mode of transportation, yet there is no denying the fact that the perception of the travellers varied on the same route within the same time frame. This difference of perceptions has to be taken into account in using the accounts of travellers as sources.

IV

Despite these differences, certain common points in the accounts of travellers remained. The absence of maps group travel and the carrying of provisions would show that the development of routes had not taken place before the 19th century at the same rate as the economy of the coastal towns were developing in the 17th Century. There are certain differences regarding the availability of basic infrastructure which, according to the general consensus, was lacking. Both Martin and Tavernier, found the infrastructure, like the inns etc, quite adequate. Martin has added a few lines to this effect in the overland travel from Surat to Masulopatam in 1670: "Those who have travelled in India, know well the discomfort in the routes. One does not find hotels to retire for the night, one camps nearly always in the contryside. One has to carry along all the necessary utensils. Nevertheless, we found everything that is necessary for cooking in abundance...."³³.

Some of the travellers had found better routes in Turkey or Persia compared to those in the Mughal empire Careri's remarks at the end of the 17th century, has already been referred to Jean Thevenot, travelling in 1655, found more caravanserais in the route from Constantinople to Smyrna, where he had gone with a caravan of merchants. But he had to buy provisions at Constantinople and was afraid of the thieves³⁴. The routes were also uneven. Tavernier had found other differences. He said: "Differing from the custom in Persia, you do not employ in India in caravans, or journeys, either assess, mules or horses, everything being carried here in oxen or by waggon, as the country is sufficiently level. If any merchant takes a horse from Persia, he does it only for show ..."³⁵. Although the political framework of the Mughal and Turkey was the same, the physical characteristics of the land had differed. This may be the reason why Thevenot, who had travelled extensively in India and Turkey, did not make any comparison of the travel between the two countries as done by Tavernier or Careri. In other words, while the one had drawn on the past experience to make a comparison, other had not. Therefore, there was no consistent and uniform format of the reporting of travellers, although the basic framework of Thevenot, Tavernir and Careri, was the same. They had give the detailed distances of the routes, broken up by a description of towns and cities, interspersed by personal anecdotes and comments. However, the reporting of the missionaries, and the merchants was not the same. The missionaries, who wrote letters to home authorities, never bothered about the distances or towns enroute. Their descriptions are far more mundane in the sense that they were far more concerned with the living and acting on day-to day basis— a kind of information available from the accounts of travellers of distant part in the form of stories and anecdotes. There is an urgency in the letters of the missionaries, which would give only the impression of travel rather than an accurate description of distances. The same impression of travel as well as the concern over distances were available in the diaries

of merchants, Francois Martin in this case, who were far more concerned about safety. They, therefore, stand in the midway between the two-traveller and the missionary—although there is a basic difference between the latter and the merchant. The missionaries were far more concerned about the political power, be it regional or central, obviously for their interest of conversion. Merchants were distantly concerned with the higher-up of the political controlling authority and were far more concerned with the official on the spot. Therefore, accounts were available with other aspects of travel from the merchants—the pass provisions, mode of travelling, security—are easily available while these did not bother the missionaries at all. But there is a fundamental element influencing the make-up of the merchant.

V

The Mughal imperial policy, like that of the Delhi Sultanat, did not touch the producers and the manufacturers, excepting laying down a guideline for the collection of revenue and keeping the law and order. The areas were left to Jaigirdars and Zamindars, who once again left the producers in peace so long they paid the revenue. The artisanal system of production, never intended for mass production, was intended for consumption in the neighbouring areas, excepting for the group of Banjaras, who carried essential commodities on bullocks over long distances, about which Tavernier had written eloquently³⁶. The exchange of products, supplemented by numerous fairs and festivals, helped the growth of limited regional routes, unevenly developed, with some trunkroutes over which the Banjaras, merchant-groups and travellers jostled. The semi-autonomous nature of political power, regionalised by innumerable number of Jaigirdars and Zamindars, helped the growth of such regionalisation of routes. Therefore, the development of routes, as done by the English in the 19th century, did not take place in the pre-English period despite the pouring of bullions from Europe and the tremendous increase of export and consequently the production in the coastal areas.

Another reason may be that the political power did not control the production process so that economic development remained isolated or regional giving rise to contradictory views and perceptions to the viewers. The Mughal administration did not take the development of routes as a central policy, leaving it to the local and regional powers with occasional exception of some Mughal noble being appointed for Rahdari of routes³⁷. The attempt of Sher Shah to build a Trunk-toute was not followed by the Mughals, who appointed officers for the buildings within the city limits. Obviously the state power, central or provincial, did not want to exploit the resources on a large scale for the approximation of raw materials. It was only when the English began to procure raw materials directly from the producers on a scale hitherto unknown, the state power under the control of the English, began to take interest in the development of routes. The central control of the English by the 'dak' system was basically not different from that of the Mughals, excepting that it tended to cover the farflung areas for the procurement of raw materials. After 1707, with the growth of provincial powers, the Mughal political interests were far more regionalised, which saw the growth of subas and sub-subas in varying degrees. In such a system, which is transforming very rapidly, the perception of travellers in

different periods of time was bound to be conflicting. Historians should be aware of such pitfalls before quoting the travellers and should take into account the context in which they were written.

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THE ITINERANT IMAGERY : SOME EXAMPLES

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UNLIKE other travellers, art often travels unnoticed. The presence of the same imagery or the evidence of its similar execution at different places distanced from one another, and apparently unrelated to each other, is likely, to lead to the conclusion that art has travelled from one place to the other. The possibility of the independent multiple presence of the same or similar art form and style is usually ruled out when the phenomenon of resemblance is based not merely on stray examples. Fortuitous affinity also does bother the art-historian, but the latter seldom tries to interpret the fact in terms of a travel of an art form or style from one place to the other. In such a case, he looks for other possible alibi for the presence of the artistic feature which is not native to the land. The phenomenon of a 'travel' of the art is envisaged usually when there is the perceptible element of transmission or continuity of a motif or mode of art originated elsewhere. It is then admitted that such motifs or modes travelled from outside the tradition operative there, had an interim presence as aliens, and finally they were accommodated in the mainstream when their antecedents were either forgotten or were ignored with indulgence.

It should, however, be mentioned that the sharing of the same artistic motif, particularly of iconographic nature, in various parts of the country due to the regulatory prescriptive injunctions does not necessarily envisage the actual 'travel' of the motif concerned, but more than that. It is indicative of the mobility of the faith-if not directly, at least through the unperceived process of percolation. In fact, the 'travel' is more obvious in the dispersal of the non-conventional. In other words, the mobility is clearly identifiable in the innovative types, or in those which apparently seem to deviate from the doctrinal way of doing it. Sociologists will bear out the fact that social deviants are more susceptible to mobility than those preferring the faithful continuity of the tradition.

This, however, does not mean that the established norms of art did not travel much, or that when they did, the identification of the itinerary is not possible. Dissemination of artistic forms and styles from many of the so-called 'Schools' of art to the various parts of the country, and even to places abroad is a recognized phenomenon of Indian art history, perhaps also of the history of the art of the world in general. In the Indian context, Mathura and Sarnath played vital roles as transmission centres. Several other centres of sculpture and painting flourished at different times wherefrom art trends travelled in all possible directions. What originated and developed as the regional or institutional mode of visual expression did spread initially to the contiguous regions, and eventually to places across depending upon its potential mobility and

the accessibility of the regions of the peregrination. The first on is determined by the personal preference of fascination of the carrier, and the other presumably to a series of interactions. In other words, the travel of the artistic form and style is basically dependent on the expediency of the carrier.

Art travels but through the aid of the carrier. There could be various types of carrier. The artist himself, or a group of artists together, could be one. The compulsion of his vocational movement is an important contributory factor facilitating the transmission of the artistic styles. Patronage is another determinant. Political or diplomatic interaction between countries is yet another. Matrimonial connections between families also played no mean a role in the travel of the arts. Through trade and commerce, or in the trail of religious and missionary activities, art did travel distances. There could be various other modes of travel, including the elective and accidental, through which art goes beyond the place of its origin.

In view of the fact that art hardly remains rooted to one place only, often, we find some artistic form or style in various spatial distributions. Of the many examples of the dissemination of art styles mention can be made of a few in order to understand the mode and modality of the travel of art. Not that these are the ideal illustrative examples, but they are nevertheless representative of the phenomenon.

Coomaraswamy has illustrated an image of Narasimha found from Besnagar. It shows the man-lion form of Visnu in the standing position.¹ What is of special interest in the sculptural representation in this otherwise conventional image of the deity is the rod-like pillar shown between the feet. This is doubtless a distinctive mode of showing the pillar in such images. Interestingly, almost a similar representation of the same deity has been discovered from Agroha in Haryana.² None of these two sculptures being of the easily portable size, the possibility that the two were executed at one particular centre and later got dispersed seems to be remote. It seems more likely that the particular mode of the representation originated in either of these two places, or in an unknown centre, and later the style travelled from one place to the other. It should, however, be pointed out that, in the present context, we do not have any supportive evidence to suggest that the two images did follow a common textual source.

A common artistic motif of mediaeval Indian sculpture is the representation of the cow suckling the calf. Many sculptural representations of this theme are known to us. Even in the coins of the Pratiharas its depiction is noticed. A visual extension of this theme is to be found in some other sculptural representations, where on the left side is shown the figure of Krishna holding the mount Govardhana, and another male figure in a somewhat militant posture, perhaps representing Indira, on the right. A number of similar representations of the episode of *govardhana-dharana* of Krishna, including the one from Jatipara in Bengal (now in the Indian

Museum collection), have been referred to by Kalpana Desai in her book on Visnu-Iconography. We have come across many additional examples of similar sculptures from various centres of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Haryana.³ In all these sculptures what strikes one is the interesting way that the gokula, the locale of the *govardhana-dharana* episode, has been visually presented, and also the same compositional format resorted to in all the examples known to us. Herein also we do not have any supportive textual prescription that might have been at the root of this striking similarity. Under the circumstances, we cannot but think in terms of a possible travel of the style, in the form at least of the motif concerned, from one place to the other.

Unfortunately, in neither of the above-mentioned two cases we are in a position to determine the place of origin of the style, and its possible route of travel from one place to the other. In order to understand the picture in a more coherent manner, we will refer to an example of the phenomenon from Buddhist art.

Of the numerous deities of the Vajrayana-Tantrayana Buddhism, the goddess Chunda occupies a very prominent position. Images of this deity are known from various centres of India and also of Nepal, Tibet, China, Mongolia, Japan, and Korea.⁴ The antiquity of the origin of the concept of this goddess can be traced back to the initial stage of the formation of the pantheon, as the references to her in the early works like the *Guhyasamaja-Tantra*⁵ and the *Manjusrimulakalpa*⁶ would indicate. A number of iconic forms of this goddess could be seen in her representations,⁷ although the prescriptive support for all of them is not available in the so-far explored texts. The most common of the forms is, however, the one in which the goddess is shown in her four-handed manifestation. Of the few varieties of her four-handed images, one, which dominates over others not only numerically but also in spatial distribution, deserves our attention.

The images of the iconic form concerned show the goddess usually seated in the *vajraparyankasana* with her principal pair of hands disposed in the *dhyanamudra*, and sometimes, holding a vase or bowl in the hands thus placed on the lap. The additional right hand is shown with a rosary in it, while the left-hand attribute is a book or manuscript. It is surprising that, although many images with the above-mentioned iconographic formulation are known,⁸ particularly from eastern India, the well-known texts on Buddhist iconographic prescriptions maintain mysterious silence on this particular iconic form. The absence of any reference to this form in the texts like the *Sadhanamala*⁹ or the *Nispannayogavali*¹⁰ which seem to record the major developments of iconography taking place till the middle of the twelfth century, is no doubt unexpected, more so because the sculptural rendering of the form could be found in the 8th-9th century art of Ellora.

The lack of prescriptive support for this form of the goddess Chunda has not, however,

posed much problem in its identification. The clue to its identity has been supplied by the inscriptional labels attached to the pictorial representations of the form seen in the two celebrated manuscripts of the *Prajnaparamita*, one (No. Add. 1813) preserved in the Cambridge University Library, and the other (No. A. 15) in the Asiatic Society, Calcutta.¹¹

The plastic and pictorial representations of this iconic form of the goddess Chunda show the following pattern of spatial distribution:

Ellora	: Stone images
Bengal	: Stone and metal images
Bihar	: Metal images
Orissa	: Stone images
Nepal	: Stone, metal, and painted images

Two things are clear from the above : (i) earliest examples of the form are known from Ellora, (ii) the iconic form was particularly popular in eastern India.

The chronological priority of the examples of the images of the form from Ellora probably does not have much bearing on the origin of the iconic motif. The Cambridge University manuscript of the *Prajnaparamita*, dated AD 1015, has an inscription attached to the pictorial representation of the form, which reads : *Latadese vumkara nagare chunda*, meaning, (the goddess) Chunda of the city of Vumkara in the Late or Gujarata country. An identical inscription¹² is there in the Asiatic Society manuscript of the same text, dated AD. 1071. These inscriptions thus indicate that this form of the deity was famous in Lata, *i.e.* Gujarat region, and that the fame was established before the beginning of the eleventh century, and, moreover, that the fame reached eastern India for being recorded with visual and inscriptional documentation. The manuscript of the *Prajnaparamita*, mentioned above, contain many other illustrations of images of various forms of deities with inscriptional labels which, in each case, refer to the regions or places connected with the respective forms of deities.¹³ In this manuscript, there are two illustrations of the goddess Chunda, one showing her four-handed form, the other representing the goddess with sixteen hands. According to the inscriptional labels, the former is associated with Latadesa or Gujarat, as has already been pointed out. The other one is associated with a place called Pattikera,¹⁴ identified with the Mainamati region of Bangladesh. It seems likely that these two forms of the same deity originated respectively at the above-mentioned places, the former in Gujarat and the latter in Bangladesh. In fact the relevant *Prajnaparamita* manuscripts seem to perpetuate the record of the origin of some of the famous forms of various deities of the Buddhist pantheon. This point can be proved on sound evidence. But we cannot afford entering into that discussion here.¹⁵

Although there is every possibility that the relevant four-handed form of the goddess

Chunda originated in Lata or Gujarat,¹⁶ it is surprising that from this place no image of the type has so far been known. But the lack of iconic remains of the type from Gujarat proper has partially been compensated by the evidence of the sculptured representations of the form from Ellora. The historical relationship between the Rashtrakutas and the Gurjara-Pratiharas, particularly in the trail of the Tripartite Struggle, is known to all of us. The possible travel of the iconic motif concerned from a region belonging to the Gurjara Pratiharas to one within the Rashtrakuta territory cannot, therefore be ruled out.

In the trail of the Tripartite Struggle itself, some of the cultural traits from the Pratihara and Rashtrakuta regions might have also reached eastern India- the domain of the palas, the other party of the historical struggle. According to the Nesari plates of Govinda III of the Rashtrakuta dynasty, the latter snatched away from the Pala ruler Dharmapala his royal banner of Bhagavatri Tara.¹⁷ It is interesting to note that there is the mention in a Nepalese Buddhist manuscript entitled *Chundavadana*¹⁸ that one of the captives from the army of Dharmapala, when released from the camp of the Rashtrakuta king (probably Govinda III), brought home a unique thing, viz., the *Chanda-Dharani-mantra* which was revealed to him in the dream during his stay in the Rashtrakuta prison.¹⁹ It is possible that this army officer imported to eastern India not only the *Chanda-Dharani-Mantra*, but also the relevant iconic form of the goddess. In other words, the above evidence, taken together, would point to the possibility of the transmission of the iconic motif concerned first from Latadesa or Gujarat to the Rashtrakuta territory, i.e., Ellora, and thence to eastern India-the domain of the Pala rulers.

But the possibility of the introduction of the goddess, more precisely her four-handed form under discussion, in eastern India direct from the Lata region, the possible place of its inception, cannot also be ruled out. According to the Pali Chronicles of Ceylon, a prince named Silabahu who inherited the kingdom of Vanga from a maternal ancestor, renounced his claims in favour of a relation, and built a new city in the kingdom of Lata which came to be known as Silapura.²⁰ The new metropolis has been identified by some scholars with Sinor in Kathiawad, and the territory in which it lay, with Lata.²¹ According to verse 3 of the Bhagalpur Copper plate of Narayanapala, Dharmapala acquired the sovereignty of Mahodya (i.e. Kanauj) by having defeated Indraraja who probably was the brother of the Rashtrakuta king Dhruva whom he had left in charge of Latesvara-mandala which presumably represented Gujarat and other Rashtrakuta possessions in the north.²² Moreover, it is interesting that in the Pala inscriptions, there is the mention of recruitment of military units from various people including the Latas.²³

These pieces of evidence point to the possibility of cultural traits having transmitted from the Gujarat region to eastern India in the early medieval period. The Nepalese Buddhist manuscript, mentioned above, seems to perpetuate the record of the transmission of the *Chunda-Dharani-Mantra*, and the manuscripts of the *Prajnaparamita* offer us a similar record in respect of an iconic motif of the goddess.

The possible transmission of the iconic motif from Gujarat to Bengal or Eastern India can be explained in the light of other socio-cultural phenomenon. A large number of Pala inscriptions from the 8th to the 12th centuries refer to the settlement in Bengal of Brahmanas hailing from Lata or Gujarat²⁴. Moreover, according to D.R. Bhandarkar and others, the Kayasthas were descended from Nagara-Brahmanas who had a large settlement in Bengal long before the 8th century A.D.²⁵. They are supposed to have originally migrated from Nagarkot in the Punjab to various parts of Gujarat and Kathiawad peninsula, Anandapur (also called Nagar) in Late being one of their chief settlements.²⁶

It is not unlikely that in the trail of migrations of Brahmanas and Kayasthas from Gujarat to Bengal, as mentioned above, the iconic motif concerned travelled from that end to this, and the *Prajnaparamita* manuscripts only perpetuate a glimpse of the memory of the fact by way inscriptional labels of the pictorial representations of the iconic form of the goddess in the following way: *Latadese Vamkara nagare Chunda*²⁷. In fact, the *Sadhanamala* has many of its colophons indicative of the origin of the respective iconographic forms. Mention should be made particularly of a few forms of deities which are referred to as being derived or originated from various places, e.g. a form of the goddess Marichi or of Kurukulla is referred to as *Oddiyana vinirgata*²⁸ (or originating from the place called Uddiyana), a form of Tara as *Mahachinakrama*²⁹ (i.e. in accordance with the formulation seen in Mahachina), a *Sadhana* of Ekajata is referred to as having been taken out from the Bhota country (*bhotesu uddnrita*) by Nagarjuna³⁰. Many other instances of the names of iconic forms being known after the places of their origin can be cited e.g., vajrayogini Tara, Khadiravani Tara, Khasarpana Lokeshvara, Vajragandhari Bhismabhangini, etc.³¹. The *Mahamayuri* contains a list of places associated with various Yaksas³². A number of Buddhist works mention the names of the goddesses along with their respective sacred places³³, which primarily are the places of their origin, similar to the mode of the reference to the *Saktapithas* in the *Puranas*.

The inscriptions of the manuscripts of the *Prajnaparamita* seem also to refer, likewise, to the place of origin of the iconic motif of the goddess Chunda. Originating from Gujarat or the Latadesa, the iconic motif concerned presumably travelled to eastern India either direct or through transmission from Ellora where the motif might have had a transit stopover. It is of significance that although the iconic motif reached eastern India before AD. 1015, the date of the *Prajnaparamita* manuscript, it remained popular right through a few more centuries. The motif influenced considerably the iconography of the deities of the Brahmanical pantheon as well. A few metal sculptures of Siva discovered from the Chittagong region of Bangladesh, and belonging to the 13th century, bear an unmistakable impress of this iconic motif.³⁴ More striking is the influence noticed in the iconography of the goddess in the celebrated 12th century sculpture of the Apitakucha form of Parvati discovered from Kagajipara in Bangladesh. Here, however, the similarity in the names of the goddesses of the respective pantheons—Chandi of the Brahmanists and Chunda/Chundi/Chunti, etc., of the Buddhists—facilitated the sharing of

the same iconographic features.³⁵ Although these similarities, borrowings, or mutual dependence can be explained in the light of the socio-political perspective of eastern India in the period between the 10th and the 12th centuries, for us at this moment it is a point of special interest that herein we have a case of the transmission of an iconic motif³⁶ not only from one region to the other, but also from one region to the other, but also from one religion to the other.

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3. For reference see Kalpana Desai's book entitled *The Iconography of Visnu* in which there is the mention of a number of such illustrations. Many other additional images of the type are now under study by Devendra Handa. I owe to him the relevant information.
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8. E.g., Saraswati, *op. cit.*, figure 132 on plate 72, figure 216 on plate 119 and figure 250 on plate 127.
9. The *Sadhanamala*, ed. B. Bhattacharyya, Vols. I & II, Baroda, 1925, 1928, knows only a four-handed form of the goddess. But it is (see *sadhanas* 129-131 and 174 fig. 174) quite different from the four-handed form of our reference.
10. The *Nispannayogavali*, ed B. Bhattacharyya, Baroda, 1949 knows the three forms of the goddess, viz., two-handed (p. 57), four-handed (p. 89), and twenty six-handed (p. 49). This four-handed form is also substantially different from the four-handed form of our present reference.
11. The illustrations of these two manuscripts and the attached inscriptional labels have been elaborately discussed by A. Fouche in his celebrated book *Etude sur l'Iconographie Bouddhique de l'Inde*, 2 Vols, Paris 1900, 1905. For the two relevant illustrations, see Saraswati, *op.cit.* colour plates Nos. 216 and 250.
12. Saraswati, *op.cit.*, pp. LXXIX and LXXXVIII.
13. E.g., *Latadese kurukullasikhare kurukllah* (Kurukulla of the Kurukulla mountain in the Lata country), *sumero vajrasattva* (Vajrasattva of the Sumeru mountain), *mahacine manjughosah* (Manjughosa of Mahacina), *suvarnapure srivijayapure lokanatha* (Lokanatha of Suvarnapura in Srivijaya), *grdhrakute prajnaparamita* (Prajnaparamita of the Grdhrakuta mountain), *Simhaladvipe-Jambhalah* (Jambhala of

the island of Ceylon), Harikelandese sila-lokanathah (Likanatha of the country of Harikela), *Konkane sivapure sahasrabhuja-lokanathah* (Lokanatha of sivapura in Konkani), *Daksinapathe Kamcinagare vasudhara* (Vasudhara of Kanci in the southern country), etc.

14. The relevant inscription reads; *Pattikere candavarabhavane cunda*, i.e. goddess Cunda "in the illustrious shrine of Cunda of Pattikera."
15. This point is being elaborately discussed in a separate article to be published elsewhere.
16. The relevant inscription refers to *Vumkaranagara* in the Lata country (letadese). It has not been decisively possible to identify a place with the name of vumkara in the Lata country or Gujarat. But U.P. Shah suggested to this author that it is possible to read *Oumkarananagare*, in the place of *Vumkaranagare*, in the relevant inscription. This suggestion seems to be quite reasonable because in the Newari script, it is sometimes very difficult to maintain a clear-cut distinction between the letters *va* and *ca*, the only perceptible difference being in the angularity of the right-hand end of the latter. Shah suggests that the acceptance of the reading as *Cumkaranagare* will facilitate the location of the place in the Lata country or Gujarat, since Cumkaranagara can be identified with Cumatkarapura in that country.
17. *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. XXXIV, p. 137. It is interesting to note that the inscription accompanying one of the illustrations in the Mss. of the *Astahasrika-prajnaparamita* (the Cambridge Ms. as well as the Asiatic Society Ms.) reads; *candradvipe Bhagavati Tara*. For a very illuminating discussion on the possible association, or rather equation, between this Bhagavati Tara of Candradvipa and Bhagavati Tara of the Pala ruler Dharmapala, as mentioned in the Nesari plates of Govinda III, see D.C.Sircar, "The Tara of Chandradvipa" *Sakti cult and Tara*, ed. D.C.Sircar, Calcutta, 1967 pp. 128-133.
18. See Ms. No.Ca. 289 in the Archives of Nepal, Kathmandu.
19. *Ibid.* folios 22a-26b.
20. *History of Bengal*, Vol.I, ed.R.C. Majumdar, Dacca, 1943, p. 39.
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Ibid.* p. 106 and fn.I.
23. *Ibid.* p. 279
24. *Ibid.* ,p. 579.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 589
26. *Loc.cit.*
27. Apart from the fact that vumkaranagare of the inscription can alternatively be read as *cumkaranagare*, as discussed in the note No.16 above, it has to be pointed out that in the same Mss. of the *Astahasrika-Prajnaparamita*. There is another illustration of a goddess, this time of Kurukutta ascribed to the Lata-country, according to the attached inscription which reads as follows : *litadese kurukulasikhare kurukulta*. Interestingly this form of the goddess kurukulta (see Saraswati, *op.cit.*, colour plates 215 & 249), seems to have a similar anterior history.
28. See *sadhana* Nos. 138-140 and 179 of the *Sadhanamala*.
29. *Sadhana* Nos. 100-101 of the *Sadhanamala*.

30. *Sadhana* No127 of the *Sadhanamala*.
31. In the name of the goddess Vajrayogini, there is presumably the allusion to the place, also known as Vajrayogini, in the Dacca-Vikrampur region of Bangladesh. The name Khadiravani-Tara might perpetuate the memory of a place infested with Khadira trees. That Khasarpana-Lokesvara has an association with village with the name of Khasarpana is known from the following statement in the *Sadhana* No.15 of the *Sadhanamala*: *Khadimandale khasarpananama gramo' sti*. The name Vajragandhari, similarly, could be taken to have something to do with Gandhara, the ancient region comprising western Punjab, and parts of Afghanistan and N.W. Frontier Provinces.
32. J.N. Benerjea, *The Development of Hindu Iconography*, Calcutta, 1856, p.143.
33. E.G. *Dakarnava* (Asiatic Society Ms.G. 8056), *Guna-Karma-Tantra Ms. Ca.* 133 of the Archives of Govt. of Nepal, Kathmandu.
34. B.N. Mukherjee, *East Indian Art Styles*, Calcutta, 1980, fig.14.
35. D.C. Bhattacharyya, "An Apitakuda Image from Kagajipara, Bangladesh", *Artibus Asiae*, Vol XXXVI, 1/2, 1974, pp.89.94.
36. Many illustrations of such transmission of iconic motifs can be cited. The most interesting example is that of the iconography of Sitadevi, as noticed in the examples of Rajasthani paintings under various names. It is well known that the image of this goddess was brought by Mansingh from Bengal and was placed by him in the Amber palace. How the iconography of the celebrated Jaganatha of Puri in Orissa got transmitted in various permutations and combinations in the iconography of Pahari paintings is also very fascinating point worth mentioning in this context. Since the present author is at present engaged in a detailed study of this phenomenon, the references to the exact citations of literal and visual documents in support of the point are not given here for obvious reasons.

ROUTES OF EPISTOLARY COMMUNICATIONS

SHYAMALKANTI CHAKRAVARTI

EPISTOLOGRAPHY or the art of letter-writing had developed into a distinct branch of literature in India like the Roman empire and the Greek world.¹ The written word of communication were known as *patra*, *lekha*, *likhana*, *likhita* in Sanskrit, while the official and business correspondence were termed as '*rajapatra*' or '*mantrapatra*'. The last was coined from Kalidasan works. In the *Vikramovasiyam* Act-III, the king calls for a *mantrapatra*, "*tat khalu mantrapatram yadanvesanaya mamayamarambhal*".² Kautilya refers to eight kinds of official correspondence viz. (1) *Prajnapana* (2) *Ajna* (3) *Paridana* (4) *Parihara* (5) *Nisristi* (6) *Pravrittika* (7) *Pratilekha* (8) *Sarvatraga*.³ A regular and a speedy despatch of written administrative letters was necessary and thus grew up a State postal service chiefly for the benefit of the court, particularly in large kingdoms and empires. Common people, however, took resort to private means to reach their letters a desired destination. It is obvious that couriers were engaged and services of equestrians were commissioned. Animals were maintained at fixed stations along the highway to help transportation of letters. Although early Indian literature and archaeological evidence do not provide much information on the routes of written communication, we have to depend upon circumstantial evidences from literary texts, epigraphic records, the canons of letter-writing and such other materials.

A few versions of Asokan Edicts were despatched to his high functionaries while the king was moving on tour or the recipients were stationed at different places on official duties. Thus Viceroy Samba received a correspondence from the king on his pilgrimage to the *Upanitha* monastery in *Manemadesha*.⁴ These two geographical names, *Manemadesha* and *Upanitha* could not be identified so far, but the city where Asoka's Viceroy Samba was stationed must have been situated near the inscribed rock at Panguraria (Pangudariyam in the Budhini Tahsil of the Sehore district of Madhya Pradesh). From Suvarnagiri in Karnataka another prince issued an order to some *mahamatras* stationed at Isila.⁵ Suvarnagiri is situated near Erragudi in the Kurnul district of Andhra Pradesh and Isila is located in the Chitradurga district of Kurutaka.

An order was also despatched to the *mahamatras* posted at Samapa in the southern Kalinga and also to the prince and the *mahamatra*⁶ who was deputed to Tosali near modern Bhuvaneswar. These orders were definitely sent through a regular machinery of the existing communication system of the Mauryan empire. The contents of royal rescripts despatched through official channel ultimately reached the public. It appears that the royal letters on portable materials were sent from the capital of Patliputra to the district head-quarters, presumably through royal mail service following riverine and overland routes. Strabo quoting Megasthenes, refers to officials responsible for keeping rivers improved, constructing roads and placing pillars at every ten stadia as guides to show by-roads and distances.⁷ The Section II of Aramaic

inscription of Asoka discovered at Laghman in Afghanistan, is a kind of distance register measured in terms of 'bow'. This can be compared with the milestone of today. In this respect the Mauryas followed the custom practised by the Achaemenid empire. Two Aramaic Edicts of Asoka from Laghman in Afghanistan⁸ speaks of *karapathi* which means military road or lord's way *i.e.* royal road. This road was partly identical with the great route from western Asia to the confines of India. It might have been extended through Taxila and several other places to Palibothra (Pataliputra). Laghman (ancient *Lampaka*) must have been situated on this highway. It is presumed, therefore, that the royal correspondence from Pataliputra travelled through this way and reached the people of Afghanistan in the Maurya times. Similar distance registers called *koshminar* were installed on the routes of *dak* during the Mughal period.

In the early literature, transportation of messages from one place to another is apparent through divergent inland and even oceanic routes. A letter was received by Buddha from a princess of Simhala through a group of merchants coming from Sravasti. The *Muktalata Avadana* story as narrated in the *Bodhisattvavadanakalpalata* describes how the Lord received a letter and reciprocated by sending a portrait of his own inscribed with the Buddhist formula of eight fold path (*astangika marga*).⁹ In the *Kriyakanda* of the *Padmapurana*,¹⁰ a chain of epistolary activity has been recorded. Madhava, son of Vikrama—a king of Taladhvaja went to the Plaksha island.¹¹ Reaching there he made correspondence with the princess Sulochana mentioning his arrival in the city from distant India seeking her hand in marriage.

In Banabhatta's *Kadamvari*, Chandrapida finds a *lekhaharaka* approaching his camp with two letters from his father Tarapida, the king of Ujjayini.¹² Kalhana in his *Rajatarangini* mentions about Tunga belonging to the Khasa tribe who took to the profession of a postman and was engaged in the royal service as bearer of despatches at distant places.¹³

Another correspondence by Parasurama from the island of Mahendra was transported to Ravana's minister Malyavan in Lanka.¹⁴ The *Bhagavatapurana* mentions sending of epistle from Vidarbha to the capital of Krisna in Dvaraka. From the temple of Purusottama in Utkala, a letter was received by Mahamoha in Varanasi.¹⁵

Writers of two epistolary poems Nagarjuna and Atisa Dipankara sent their communications across the mountains from Sadahadvana in Kashmir and Tibet respectively.¹⁶ This indicates a mountaneous route of epistles.

The letter-carrier or postman referred to in Indian literature as *patrahara*, *lekhaharaka*, *patravahaka*, had to traverse tracts of hilly areas and forests. Shaman Hwui Li writes in the life of Hiuen Tsang that king Harsa wrote some letters which were consequently handed over to the official guides, the head men of villages called *Mahataras* of Chinese pilgrim, for presenting them to the authorities of the countries through which the pilgrims would pass.¹⁷

There were some strong exchange of letters between Harsavardhana of Kanauj and Bhaskaravarma of Kamarupa on the issue of providing hospitality to the learned Chinese pilgrim, Hiuen Tsang as their royal guest. This also indicates a route from the hilly region of Assam through the plains of the Gangetic valley. From the Gupta age onwards epigraphic records mention various kinds of despatcher of messages such as *presanika*, *vaiksepika*, *dirghadhvaga*, *abhittvaramana*¹⁸ and *dhavakagechchin*. The last two were responsible for quick deliveries. The term *abhittvaramana* seems to mean a messenger or courier of letters meant for quick delivery like the *dhavakagechchin*, the speedy messenger with drums as mentioned in the Nepalese inscriptions.¹⁹ The *dirghadhvagas* were the postal runners who had to travel a long distance. This presupposes a more or less undisturbed and regular routes and thoroughfare.

It is interesting to note that the daily wages of these messengers were nominal (at the rate of $1\frac{1}{2}$ *pana* in the Gupta period, $\frac{2}{3}$ *akkas* in the Chola time and 2 *dams* during the Mughal age).²⁰ With the Muslim rulers in India the roads were developed as a regular *dak-chowki* system was introduced.

There was no special route for movement of epistles. The runners or men engaged in despatch of business correspondence followed the normal country-wide roads and public thoroughfare which were time to time developed by the dynasties which ruled different parts of India.

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INDIA THROUGH THE EYES OF GREEK VISITORS *

AMITABHA BHATTACHARYYA

THE earliest Greek account of India as incorporated in the *History* of Herodotus was written by Scylax of Caryanda. He was a sea-captain and was employed by king Darius (B.C. 522-486) to explore the Indus (Herodotus, IV, 44). About B.C. 500, Hecataeus of Miletus had written his work on geography. His knowledge, however, did not exceed beyond the eastern limits of the Persian empire. He knew the Indus and the people called Gandari.

When Herodotus spoke of the Indians in the middle of the fifth century B.C., he had before him the account of Hecataeus (now lost). The India of Herodotus, which constituted the twentieth Satrapy of Persian empire, is undoubtedly based on the term Hidu occurring in the Nakhs-i-Rustam and Persepolis inscriptions of the reign of Darius. That the knowledge of Herodotus in relation to India was not confined to the Persian empire, seems to follow from his statement that there were Indians in the south who had never been subjects of Darius. He knew also of the majority of the Indians in terms of population and the variety of languages used by them. Herodotus was a great traveller, but did not travel to India.

In the fourth century B.C. Alexander, as stated by Arrian, sent Nearchus to explore the Erythrean sea. The account of his sea-voyage from the river Indus to the Persian sea has been narrated by Arrian in his *Indica* Part II. In the same century Megasthenes visited India. Fragments of his works has been preserved in the works of later writers. The *Periplus* of the Erythrean sea, an account of a voyage from the Red sea to India, was probably written in the first century A.D. We have mention about India in the writings of the Greek historians and geographers like Arrian, Strabo, Ptolemy and others some of whom might have used the first hand knowledge of the actual travellers. In the seventh century A.D. Cosmas Indicopleustes, the author of the *Christian Topography*, refers to India.

The Accounts of the greek visitors, which have so far come down to us, deal with (1) geography, (2) flora and fauna, (3) trade and (4) manners and customs of India. In some cases they supplement the knowledge which we derive from the indigenous sources.

* Synopsis of the paper

TRAVELS OF SRI CHAITANYA AND HIS FOLLOWERS *

SHRIVATSA GOSWAMI

Charaiveti ! Charaiveti ! this Vedic *sutra* well summarizes the nature of human quest for knowing the unknown and the consequent imperative to "move" in its direction. This process of realization is the basis of human movements, both physical and spiritual. In the making of Indian culture and religion the journeys and travels of groups and individuals have their significant contribution.

This paper intends to discuss the travels of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (1486-1533), joint incarnate of Sri Krishna and Radha, a great vaishnava saint, philosopher and reformer. Groomed as scholar in the eastern Kashi of Nabadwip, Chaitanya took a different spiritual route after his travel to Gayadhama. His years in the middle of his life were spent in very extensive and intense travelling across the length and breadth of the Indian sub-continent. These travels went a long way in shaping the religio-cultural history of India.

Sri Chaitanya's travels were like a stone thrown in the pool, and its ripples ever increased in the form of the travels of his associates and followers. Extensive tours of Sri Nityananda were mainly responsible for the proselytization of Chaitanyaite sect and its organization in eastern India.

The most significant result of Chaitanya's travels were the travels of his legendary followers, known as six Gosvamis, to Vraja-Vrindaban and the establishment of the Vaisnava axis mundi, at the playgrounds of Radha and Krishna, whose sacred geography is mostly attributed to Sri Chaitanya's travels. This was to become the workshop and later a *de facto* "head office" of the Chaitanya Movement, a very powerful stream of Indian culture since 16th century. Its contributions to literature, philosophy, arts, architecture of India are immense.

The ritualization of the travels was given priority by the Chaitanyaite connoisseurs. Gopala Bhatta Gosvami in his *Haribhakti Vilasa* while talking about the temple ritual calendar shows the supremacy of four *yatras* as the greatest Vaisnava festivals. Of course, these are four annual travels of the divine, known as Chandana Yatra, Snana Yatra, Ratha Yatra and the Rasa Yatra. Theologically it is a unique Hindu feature of God setting out to meet His devotees!

Another follower of Sri Chaitanya and a very little known colleague of the six Gosvamis achieved a unique feat of institutionalizing a *yatra* which is one of the greatest annual

pilgrimage event of India. Vanayatra or Vrajayatra, as it may be called attracts tens of thousands of devotees to Vraja every autumn to undertake a mouth long *yatra* of the land of Krishna, walking a circuit of nearly 350 kms on foot and camping in the fields. It was the work of Narayana Bhatta (first half of the 16th century), who has also given us the *Vrajabhakti Vilasa*, a *Yatra* manual-cum-*sthala mahatmya*. He also own the credit for organizing and starting the tradition of "Processional theatre" to accompany this pilgrimage. These dramas are popular today as Rasalila.

Amongst its many purposes, travels play the role of means of communication, organization, integration and exchange of ideas. The history of Chaitanya Movement owes much to travels on this count. The travels of Hemalata Thakurani from Bengal brought devotional vitality to Vrindaban and the famous trio of Srinivasa Acharya, Narottam Dasa Thakura and Shyamananda Prabhu travelled to Bengal, North Eastern states and Orissa respectively to distribute the fruits of the works of Vrindaban Gosvamis and provided a rock base of literature, philosophy and ritual to the Chaitanya Movement on a large scale.

The story may be very long, but to sum it up, it would be worth mentioning here some interesting travels of some Chaitanyaitees in the twentieth centuries, which in the words of Professor Basham, "set a solitary example of a total transplantation of a Indian cultural tradition in the West."

* Synopsis of the paper

EARLY ROUTES OF KONKAN : CONTACTS WITHIN AND BEYOND THE SUBCONTINENT *

RANABIR CHAKRAVARTI

I

THE common notion about the other-worldliness of Indians, the insularity of India and the stagnant society and economy over millennia during the pre-modern period has been strongly challenged by a large number of historians since the 1950s. Discovery of new facts-archaeological, literary and epigraphic- and fresh analyses of known data have effectively demonstrated that the sub-continent witness in the pre-modern phase, considerable inter and intra regional contacts and communications. Notwithstanding the adverse natural elements and impediments and severe lack of communication facilities the vast plains and the navigable rivers of the sub-continent allowed enough scope of movement of people for political, economic and cultural considerations. That is why a study of early routes of the sub-continent is a valid subject of inquiry. This will be further illustrated by the fact that the two principal and broad divisions of the sub-continent viz. *Uttarapatha* (the northern quarter) and *Daksinapatha* (the southern quarter) are so named after the two major trade routes. Historical evidence amply shows how contacts were established, over long periods, between South Asia and West and Central Asia (mainly through mountain passes in the northwestern boarderland of the subcontinent).

The role of the Indian Ocean should also be taken into consideration in establishing contacts along the two sea-boards of the sub continent and also with its neighbouring and distant areas. The geographical position of India gave it a vantage position as an intermediary in the overseas trade network between West Asia and China. Despite the traditional taboos against sea-faring, early Indians often did not hesitate to undertake sea voyages.

II

The geographical focus of the present paper is on Konkan, a narrow strip of coastal land between the Arabian Sea and the Sahyadri range of mountains and stretching from Daman in the north to Goa in the south. The coast, divided into two broad parts the north and the south, is located between the Gujarat and the Malabar littorals. Though the coast appears to have been shut off from the main land by the Sahyadri range, mountain passes provide vital linkage between the littoral and the mainland (western, central and eastern Deccan). The natural alignment of northern Konkan with the Malwa plateau particularly the western Malwa, which

acts as a corridor between north India and the Deccan, could profitably be utilized to reach 'the Delhi-Agra axis and the Cambay mode'.

The role of the sea can hardly be over emphasized to understand Konkan's maritime links with near and distant territories. The Konkan ports not only witnessed coastal voyages to the Gujarat and the Malabar littorals and intra-port journeys within Konkan but also were linked with West Asia through the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea. This will be particularly evident from the emergence of the Konkan coast in Roman trade with India (late 1st century B.C.—3rd century A.D.) and also from the impact of the Arab Sea faring since the rise of the Islam. The fluctuating importance of the Persian gulf in the Indian Ocean trade seems to have influenced the long-distance maritime network of Konkan.

Routes of communication of early Konkan-overland, riverine and maritime being largely influenced by its geography and climate, forces of invariance rather than change characterize this network of communication. The continued importance of the network of overland routes through ghats is clearly illustrated by the fact that several railway tracks more or less follow the ancient routes. A major political change and/or geographical discovery could of course bring about, favourable or otherwise, the few but significant changes in the existing network. The Konkan coast, however, appears to have been secondary to the Gujarat and Malabar littorals, at least from the point of view of trade. Konkan and particularly its southern part was not agriculturally as prosperous as Gujarat and hence overland routes could not effectively penetrate into the extensive and fertile mainland. Most of the Konkan rivers are usually unsuitable for navigation which also put it in a relatively disadvantageous position. And last but not the least, increasingly better utilization of the monsoon made the Malabar littorals a major converging point for vessels both from the eastern and the western sectors of the Indian Ocean.

* Synopsis of the paper

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